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Detail of a Sachipar cotton sari, Orissa, with chequer motifs in the field and fish and flower motifs in the border. Photograph: Anil Bharadwaj, courtesy Crafts Museum, New Delhi.



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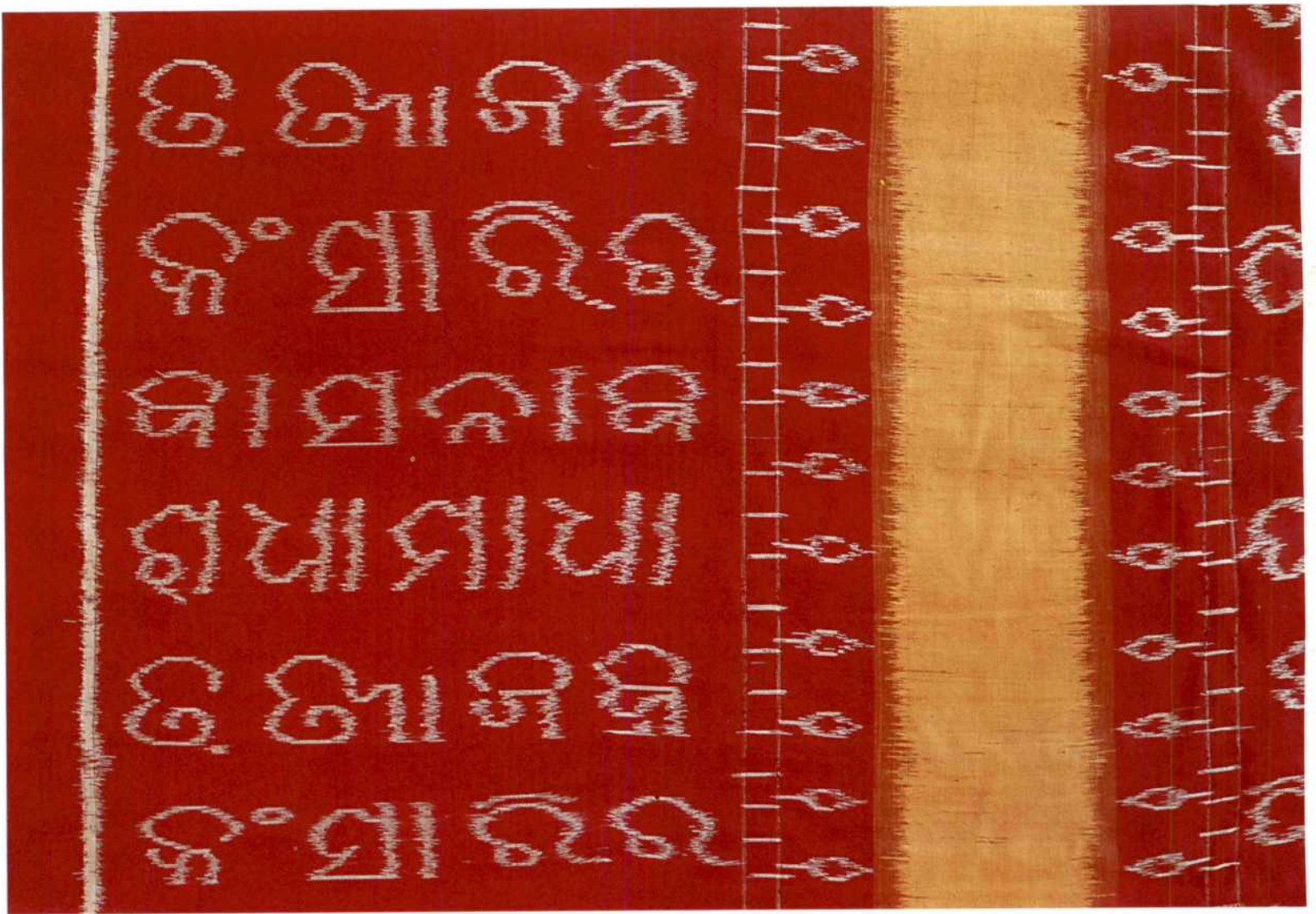
End-panel of a Sagtapar silk sari, Orissa, with floral and animal motifs woven in ikat technique. Photograph: Anil Bharadwaj, courtesy Crafts Museum, New Delhi.



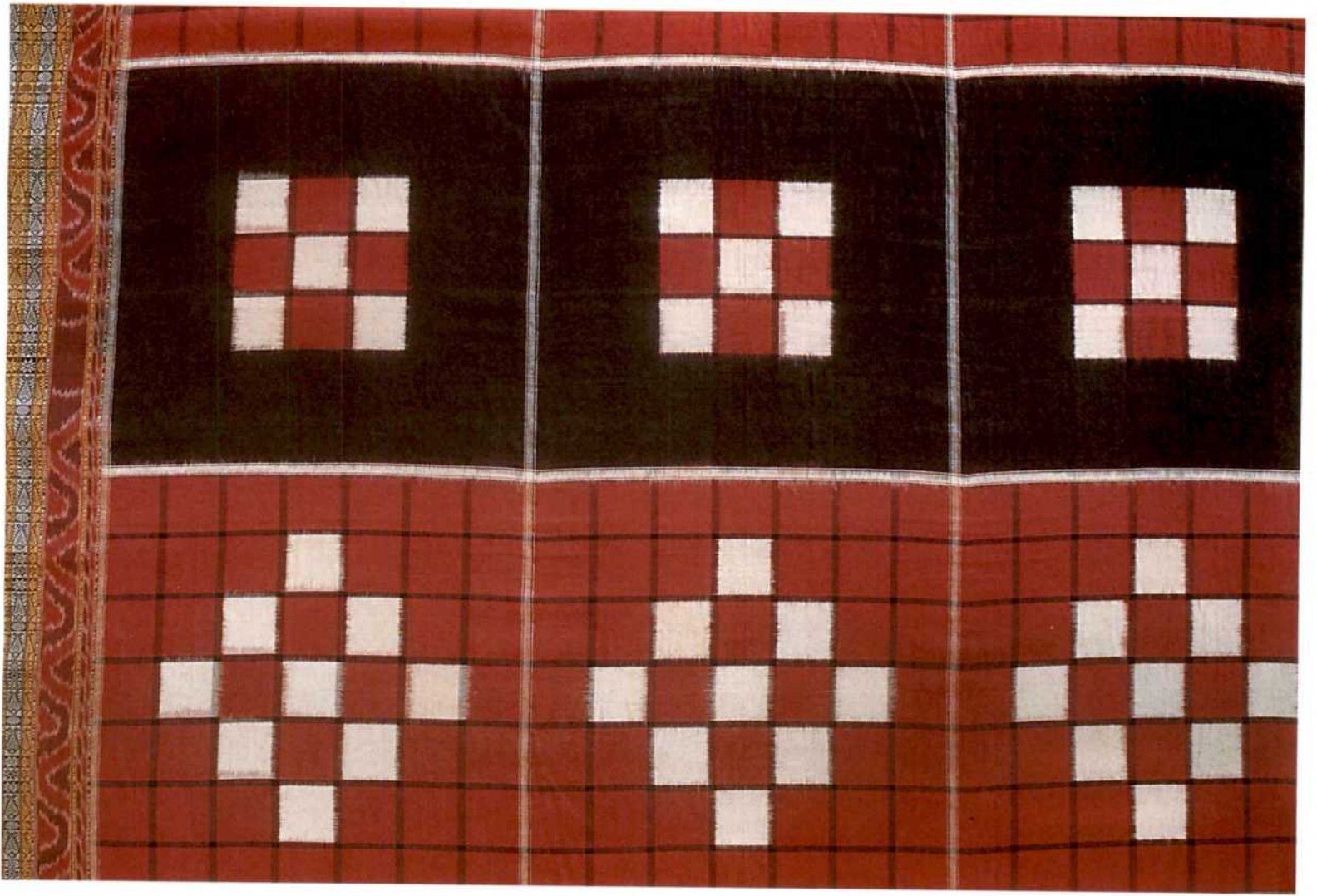
Detail of a silk sari, Orissa, with serpent diagram motif woven in ikat technique.
 Photograph: Anil Bharadwaj, courtesy Crafts Museum, New Delhi.



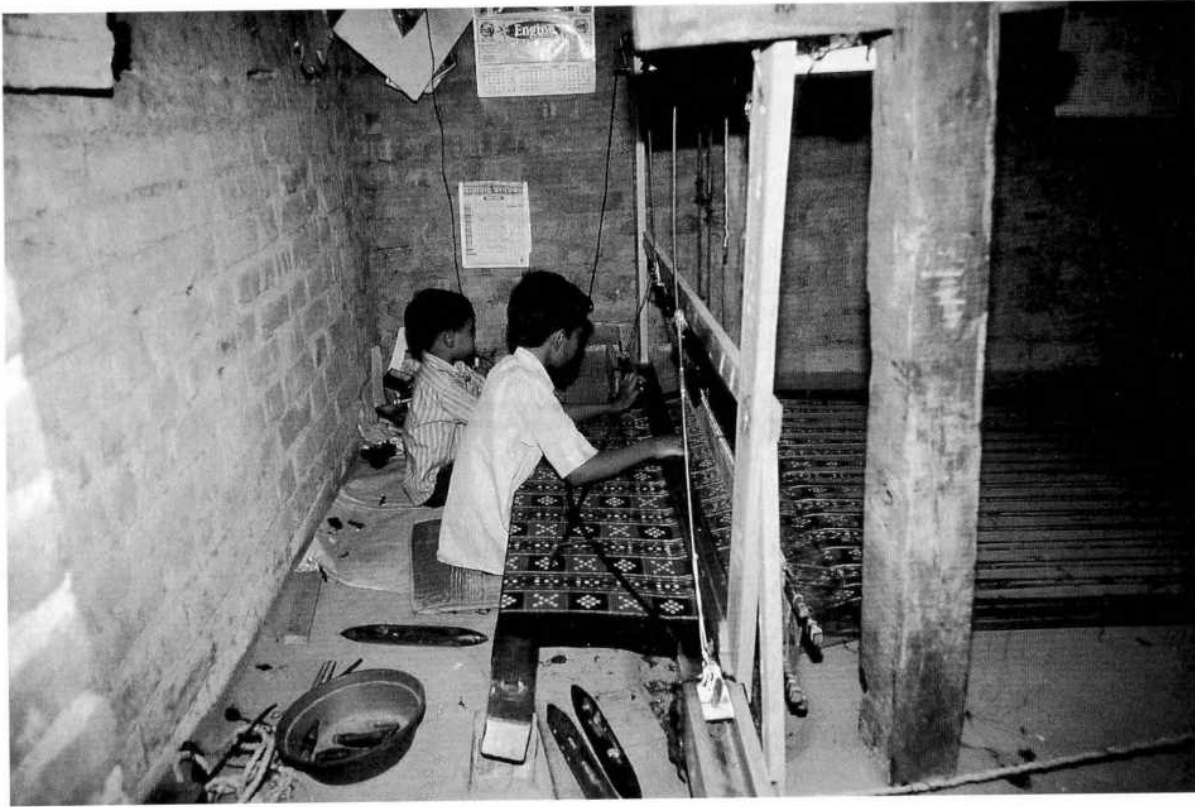
Detail of a Kalaratna cotton sari, Orissa, with tantric motifs woven in ikat technique. Photograph: Anil Bharadwaj, courtesy Crafts Museum, New Delhi.



Detail of a silk sari, Orissa, with a stanza from the *Gita Govinda* woven in ikat technique. Photograph: Anil Bharadwaj, courtesy Crafts Museum, New Delhi.



Detail of a Sagtapar silk sari, Orissa, with gameboard pattern woven in ikat technique. Photograph: Anil Bharadwaj, courtesy Crafts Museum, New Delhi.



Children after school assist their parents to learn the process of weaving of a typical Sambalpur sari. Bhatli village, Baragarh district. Photograph: Cornelia Mallebrein.



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Weavers colouring the threads before weaving a typical Sambalpur sari. Near Baragarh, Baragarh district. Photograph: Cornelia Mallebrein.



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Detail of a cotton sari, Orissa, with fish and floral motifs woven with extra supplementary weft. Photograph: Anil Bharadwaj, courtesy Crafts Museum, New Delhi.





Krishna Playing the Flute. Orissa, 18th century. Ivory; height: 18.4 cm.

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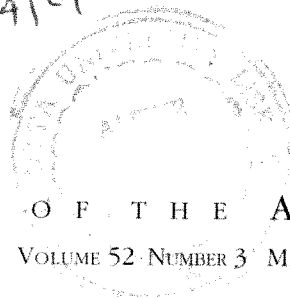
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* From *Orissa Revisited*, edited by Pratapaditya Pal, Marg Publications (March 2001).

Cover: Detail showing temple woven in tassari in pallu of an Orissa cotton sari. Photograph courtesy Amr Vastra Kosh Trust, New Delhi.

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[In this age of information I have some information that will probably be music to the ears of all those millions who now use the computer as their primary source of knowledge. In a few months' time, you can log on to www.marg-art.org and bingo you will be able to enter the enchanted world of *Marg* that has been continuously enriching our lives since 1946. This enormous task was achieved by among others Biswajeet Rath, who is now a member of the Marg editorial team. I will therefore allow him to tell the story of Marg's entry into cyberspace in his own words. – General Editor]

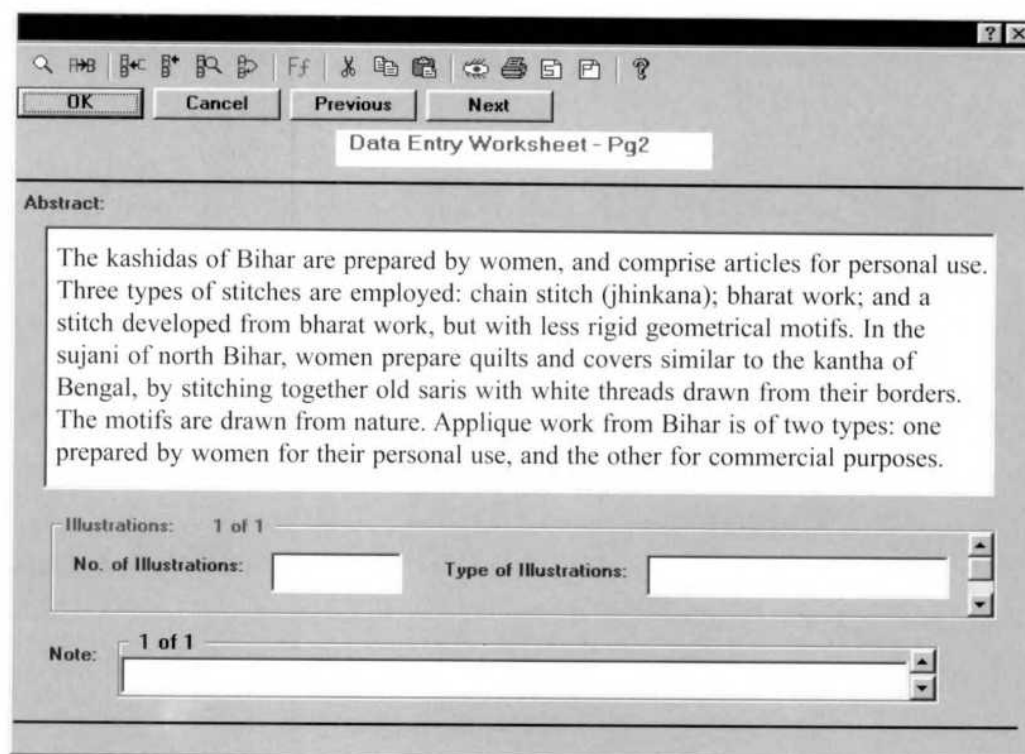
In April 1999 Marg began the process of compiling and digitizing abstracts and indexes of all articles published in volumes 1 to 50 (1946–99). With financial support from the Sir

Ratan Tata Trust and in collaboration with the SHPT School of Library Science (SNDT University, Mumbai), the Marg Database was uploaded on the computer in June 2000, and satisfactorily tested out as a workable retrieval system for researchers, institutions, individuals, and all those generally concerned with the arts. The vast range of subjects covered by Marg magazines and books through the years is only too well known to its readers, and the computerized database now allows a dynamic search for articles published in *Marg* on any specific theme, geographical area, or historical period. Although the in-built thesaurus is limited to the contents of *Marg*, it is the first art thesaurus of its kind in India, and can be used as a model by others in the process of building and

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developing a thesaurus in any art-related field.

The use of the Marg database is now restricted to users of MINISIS software. However, a search engine in CD-ROM format is under construction, and non-MINISIS users will soon have access to this useful and convenient tool of research. Marg is also working on widening the user network of the database by making it available on the Net. Perhaps even more challenging is the idea of linking full-text articles to the database, as this would meet the requirement of readers keen to access out-of-print issues of *Marg*.

The possibilities are enormous, the scope limitless.

The computer chip is far from substituting the printed word, and browsing on the Net cannot compare with the pleasure of leafing through a lavishly illustrated magazine of the arts. However, the Marg database, and its future application in a wider user-network environment, has the inherent advantages of storage, retrievability,

search capability, online updates, global visibility, and easy carry; it can serve as a dynamic study kit without being girdled in time and space.

India is now in the third millennium of documented historical accounts. The bulk of this literature continues to lie on the shelves of institutional and private libraries. It is now time that such data sources emerged beyond the covers of books as vital tools for research, accessible to a wider global readership.



Bhubaneswar (Ekamra-kshetra): Temple Town and Cultural Centre

Thomas Eugene Donaldson

Orissa is particularly noted as “a land of temples” and its great sanctity is reflected in the writings of early art historians, as in the case of James Fergusson who declares that “there are more temples now in Orissa than in all the rest of Hindustan put together,”¹ while W.W. Hunter states that “from end to end, it is one region of pilgrimage.”² Although Orissa was considered to be outside the mainstream of orthodox Brahmanism in numerous texts, other texts glorify its great sanctity. In the *Brahma Purana* (chs. 26, 39, 40), for example, where the sages ask Brahma about the most excellent place on earth, that bestows virtue (*dharma*), love (*kama*), wealth (*artha*), and salvation (*moksha*), and that is the most excellent of all holy centres, Brahma’s answer to this inquiry, which he claims to be an ancient traditional account connected with the Vedas, is Bharata – the Indian subcontinent. In particular, however, he singles out Utkala (Orissa) and its four great religious centres: Konaditya (Konark, for the worship of Surya); Viraja (Jajpur, for the worship of Devi); Ekamra (Bhubaneswar, for the worship of Shiva); and Puri (for the worship of Vishnu), considering those who stay there to be dwellers of heaven while the sites themselves yield worldly pleasures and salvation on this very earth.³

In respect of Ekamra, Brahma declares that it is as auspicious and splendid as

Varanasi, its name evolving from a single mango tree situated there in a previous *kalpa* (age). He describes the beauty of Ekamra, its splendid streets, lofty mansions, its many temples, its gardens which were comparable to the Nandana garden, its perpetual festivities, and, in particular, its lovely women. In area it extended two and a half *yojanas* (about fifteen kilometres). As noted in various other texts devoted to the origin and history of the notable temples of Bhubaneswar or sacred places of Orissa, such as the *Ekamra Purana*, the *Kapila-samhita*, the *Svarnadrimahodaya*, and the *Ekamra-chandrika*, the sacred locality of the ancient centre of Ekamra extended over an area of about sixteen or twenty kilometres (three *yojanas*), from the Khandagiri/Udayagiri hills on the west to Tankapani on the east and from Miyapalli on the north to Dhauli hill on the south, suggesting that it was much larger than the present temple town of Bhubaneswar. The total number of temples included in this area at one time, as recorded in the hyperbolic language of the *Ekamra Purana*, was a hundred thousand while lingas numbered ten million,⁴ obvious exaggerations to heighten its sanctity. Within its precincts, in addition to an ancient fort (Shishupalgarh), were Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Jain monuments testifying to a religious harmony and tolerance which remains consistent

throughout most of the recorded history of Orissa, culminating in the cult of Jagannath in which the modes of worship synthesize Vedic, Puranic, Tantric, Buddhist, and tribal features.

Evidence of the antiquity of Ekamra-kshetra is provided by the Ashoka rock-edict and the image of an elephant emerging from a large rock at Dhauli (figure 1), a bell capital found in the Ashoka Jhara (tank) near the Rameshvara temple, and a pillar now converted into a huge Shiva-linga enshrined in the Bhaskaresvara temple in the present temple town of Bhubaneswar, datable to the Maurya period. This ancient metropolis, known as Toshali when Ashoka posted a provincial governor here, was the chief city of the Mauryan province of Toshala. Included among fragments dating to the 2nd–1st centuries BCE are railing pillars discovered near the Bhaskaresvara temple, testifying to the existence of a stupa, and numerous *yaksha* and *naga* images scattered throughout the environs. According to a 3rd-century

inscription at Nagarjunakonda and information provided in the 3rd–4th century *Gandavyuha* section of the *Avatamsaka-sutra*, Toshali was noted as a sphere of intensive missionary activity involving monks propagating both the Hinayana and Mahayana doctrines.⁵ Later sculptures discovered in the area of the Bhaskaresvara temple, including images of Tara, Lokanatha, and Halahala Lokeshvara, testify that the Buddhist establishment was still in existence up to the late 12th century. The *kshetra* itself appears to have been ringed with stupas at one time with remnants being discovered at Shishupalgarh, Dhauli, Kurkimundia, Aragarh, Kapilaprasad (Sundaragram), etc.

Early testimony of this prevailing religious tolerance is provided in the concluding paragraphs of the Hati-gumpha (cave 14) inscription on Udayagiri hill where King Kharavela, a devout follower of Jainism, shows equal respect and honour for all religious denominations, even using the

1

Dhauli hill: forefront of an elephant emerging from a boulder. 3rd–2nd century BCE. Photograph: Jessica Donaldson.



epithet “*sava-devāyatanasamkāra-karaka*”, indicating that he was the repairer of abodes of all deities.⁶ The sculptured reliefs on these Jain caves on the adjacent hills of Khandagiri and Udayagiri, referred to as Kumara and Kumari in epigraphic records or collectively as Khandachala in later orthodox texts, can be dated to the 1st century BCE. Of particular interest are the reliefs of cave 1 (Rani-gumpha) of Udayagiri hill which are the most extensive series of sculptured scenes to be found in any rock-cut examples of this period anywhere in India. The reliefs are divided into nine compartments on both storeys with those of the lower storey depicting the victorious march of a king, possibly Kharavela, while the scenes of the upper storey apparently depict mythological scenes, including one of abduction and possibly one of Dushyanta’s first meeting with Shakuntala (figure 2).⁷ The abduction scene is repeated on cave 10 (Ganesha-gumpha) while a second scene depicts the popular story of the elopement of Vasavadatta, princess of Ujjayini, with King Udayana of Kaushambi. Equally interesting is the scene in cave 9 (Manachapuri-gumpha) that depicts the worship of a Jain symbol which some scholars identify as the reinstallation of the Kalinga-Jina by Kharavela. The most interesting early reliefs on Khandagiri are the tympana images of cave 3 (Ananta-gumpha) which include a royal figure (Surya?) riding in a chariot, a standing Gaja-Lakshmi, and a scene of figures worshipping a sacred tree, probably a *kevala* associated

with a Tirthankara. While only symbols were worshipped during this early phase, in the reign of Uddyota-kesari (circa 1040–65 CE), a Shaivite king of the Somavamshi dynasty, images of Tirthankaras were carved in caves 11 (Lalatendukesari-gumpha) and 7 (Navamuni-gumpha). The predilection for narrative scenes noted at Udayagiri reappears on the earliest extant Shaiva temples, especially in the *baranda* recess, with scenes from the epics (figure 3).

In addition to its renown as a Shaiva-*kshetra*, Tantric texts glorify Ekamra as a Shakta-*pitha*, i.e. a centre of Devi worship, as in the *Jnanarnava Tantra* where Ekamra is no. 5 of 50 *pithas*. Other texts include the *Brihannila Tantra* where the presiding deity is Eka, and the *Namastottarasata* and the *Pranatoshani Tantra* where she is named Kirtimati. Kirtimati is also associated with Ekamra in the *Matsya Purana* (13.26–53) and the *Devi Bhagavata Purana* (7.30.53–102). In the *Tantrasara*, where Ekamra is *pitha* no.12, the presiding Devi is Bhagavaha.⁸ In the *Brahmanda Purana* (Lm, 44.93–100) Ekamra is *pitha* no.10. Archaeological and epigraphical evidence also substantiates the importance of Ekamra as a Shakta-*pitha*. There are three extant sets of *matrikas* (mothers) on temples at Ekamra while a temple dedicated to the *saptamatrika* was situated near the main gate of the Lingaraja temple,⁹ the only surviving image being one of Varahi now in the temple compound. There was also a shrine dedicated to Varahi at the northern limit of



2

Udayagiri hill: Rani-gumpha (Cave 1); frieze on upper storey depicting Dushyanta’s first meeting with Shakuntala. 1st century BCE. Photograph: Thomas Donaldson.



3

Bhubaneswar:
Shatrughneshvara temple;
baranda frieze on north side
depicting the marriage
procession of Shiva. Late
6th century CE. Photograph:
Thomas Donaldson.

Ekamra which is mentioned in a verse demarcating the area of Ekamra-kshetra while, according to local tradition at Hirapur, about five kilometres east of the present temple town, the Chausat Yogini *pitha* at this site was included within the *pancha-krosha ayantana*, i.e. five *kos* (about sixteen kilometres) radius or boundary road from the pilgrimage centre, of ancient Ekamra-kshetra.¹⁰

In the *Svarnadrimahodaya* it is recorded that four Chandikas were enshrined on the four sides of the Bindusarovara, the large tank dominating the centre of Bhubaneswar. Two of these images are of Chamunda – one in the *jagamohana* (hall) of the Uttareshvara temple on the north and the other the presiding deity of the Mohini temple on the south – while the other two are of Mahishamardini – one on the east and the other on the west bank. There is also an image of Mahishamardini within the *jagamohana* of the Mohini temple while the presiding deity of the Vaital Deul, just off the southwest corner of the Bindusarovara, is Chamunda, the seventh *matrika* in an *ashtamatrika* grouping. Chamunda is also the presiding deity of the Kalika Devi temple (figure 4). All of these images can be dated to the 8th or early 9th century. Other Shakta shrines within the present temple town include the Daksha-chandi, the Bhuasuni, the Gauri, the Gopalini, the Savitri, and the Parvati, the last three situated within the compound of the Lingaraja temple. The name Kirtimati for the presiding Devi of Ekamra-*pitha* mentioned in many of the texts is obviously the feminine of

Kirttivasa, a corruption of Krittivasa (covered with skin) by which Shiva (Tribhuvaneshvara) was known in orthodox texts. Once corrupted, numerous legends were created to explain the origin of the name “Kirttivasa”. According to one, Shiva came to be known as Kirttivasa because he contrived the death of two demon brothers, Kirti and Vasa, commanding Parvati to kill them. The large tank known as the Devi-pada-hara, accordingly, was created by her when pressing the demons beneath her feet,¹¹ while Ekamra is frequently referred to in medieval epigraphic records as Krittivasa-kshetra.

Its greatest renown, as indicated, is as a Shaiva-kshetra, and the majority of its extant temples are dedicated to Shiva. In the *Mahabharata* (Vana-parva) it is referred to as Svayambhu-vana, the seat of Vishvakarma's penance; in the *Skanda Purana* it is referred to as Sambhava-kshetra with its great temple being called Kotilingeshvara (II.ii.12.8–10), while in various texts it is referred to as Dvitiya-Kashi, i.e. second Kashi (Varanasi).¹² Extant temples covering nearly a thousand years of sustained architectural activity testify to its great archaeological importance for historians. Fergusson, for example, was of the opinion that, altogether, there is not “any group which, if properly investigated, would add more to our knowledge of Indian architecture, and give it more precision, than the Bhuvaneshvara temples”.¹³ The earliest surviving temples date to the late 6th and early 7th centuries, during the hegemony of the Shailodbhavas though there is no tangible

evidence that any of their kings were responsible for the construction of these temples. As a group they already evince the basic elements of the later temples in rudimentary form, suggesting a certain maturity of evolution, though there is a lack of uniformity and symmetry in the overall

decorative programme, as well as inconsistency in the iconography and craftsmanship of individual motifs, to indicate an incipient development.¹⁴

Although religious harmony is still evident in the Asanapat stone inscription which records that Maharaja Saturbhanja of the



4
Bhubaneswar: Kalika Devi temple; eight-armed Chamunda. Late 8th century. 80.0 x 49.5 cm. Photograph: Jessica Donaldson.



5
Bhubaneswar: Bhavani-Shankara temple compound; *chaturmukha-linga* retrieved from the Bindusarovara. 7th century. 54.6 x 33.0 cm. Photograph: Jessica Donaldson.

Naga dynasty, a devout worshipper of Shiva, patronized and built dwellings and viharas for *bhikshus* (Buddhist mendicants), *nirgranthikas* (Jain mendicants), and other mendicants as well as for brahmans,¹⁵ this harmony apparently was shattered with the conquest of Orissa by Shashanka of Gauda at the beginning of the 7th century. Shashanka, who is said to have demolished Buddhist monasteries in large numbers, is condemned by the Buddhist community and praised by the Shaivas. According to tradition as recorded in the *Ekamra Purana* and other Sanskrit works dealing with the history of Ekamra-kshetra, Shashanka built a Shaiva temple for Lord

Tribhuvaneshvara at Ekamra, most likely a suburb of Toshali, and performed worship there. From this time onward the shrine of Tribhuvaneshvara became the dominant temple in this metropolis and it was most likely then that the Bindusarovara tank was dug, becoming the focal point of the temple area. Although the temple built by Shashanka no longer exists, being replaced by the present Lingaraja temple, there are images within the compound which may have belonged to the original temple while a *chaturmukha-linga* from this period was recently retrieved from the Bindusarovara (figure 5). With the submission of Shashanka to Harshavardhana of Kanauj and Bhaskaravarman of Assam, sometime between 619 and 624 CE, the Shailodbhavas appear to have asserted their independency. It was at this time that the Parashurameshvara temple was likely constructed (figure 6). It represents the culmination of this early phase of temple construction which was strongly influenced by the Pashupata sect of Shaivism. Iconographically the temple is especially important for the numerous cult images within its decorative programme, including even the *dikpalas* (guardians of directions) and *saptamatrika* (seven mothers). Architecturally it displays an overall clarity of design in plan and elevation which remains the hallmark of Orissan temple construction.

Very little is known about the history of Orissa during the 7th and 8th centuries but it seems plausible that the break-up of the Shailodbhava hegemony was primarily due to the emergence of the Bhauma-karas in northern Orissa. Five of the early Bhauma-kara kings were devout Buddhists and they were active in erecting Buddhist structures as recorded in various inscriptions. Whereas at least one of their wives was Hindu, religious harmony was especially prevalent in the latter part of the dynasty as various kings donated land for the ceremonial worship of images, maintenance of existing structures, or repairs to edifices of both Buddhism and Hinduism. In the loosely constructed administrative policy followed by the Bhauma-karas a certain

amount of autonomy was allowed to the minor ruling families. During the period of disunity following the Pala and Rashtrakuta invasions of the early 9th century, these minor dynasties gained even greater independence and in some cases even challenged Bhauma-kara sovereignty. During this period of political chaos and disunity very little in the way of architectural construction took place at Ekamra, though temples were being constructed on a large scale by these feudatory rulers, obviously reflecting the development of local pride. That Ekamra had grown into an important centre of pilgrimage by the 10th century, however, is evident in various inscriptions of dynastic rulers visiting the site.¹⁶

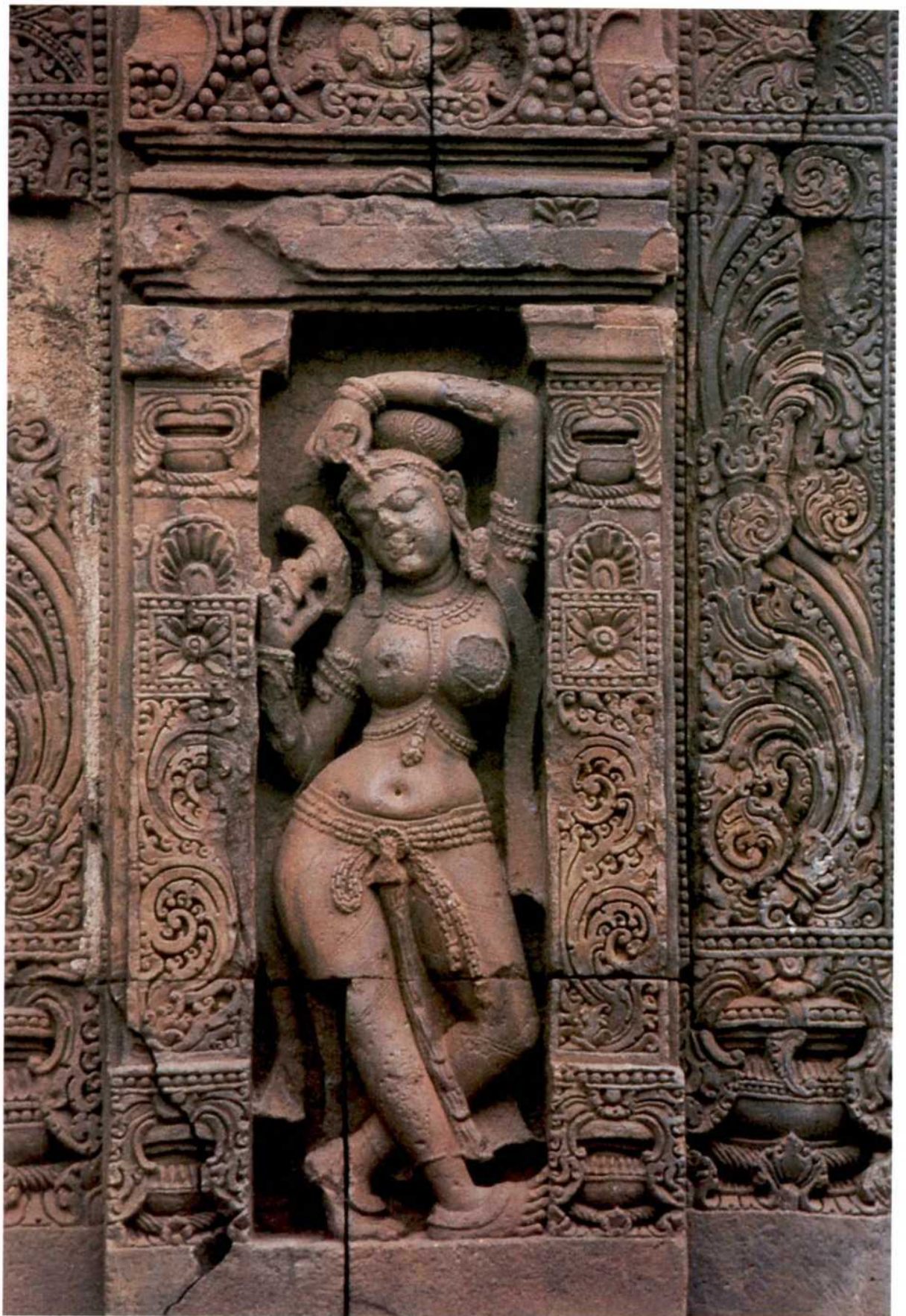
Though still small in size, the temples of the Bhauma period at Ekamra display experimental architectural features and an expanding iconographic programme which

successfully integrates outside influences into its evolving indigenous tradition. The style and body proportions of the sculpture are more naturalistic, more plastic, and more sensitive than on earlier temples while the scrollwork, though less vigorous due to its repetitive patterning, is more elegant and refined as it serves primarily as a foil and frame for figure motifs. In addition to the numerous Shaiva temples, patronage was also extended to Shakta worship as indicated earlier. The culmination of this second phase of temple construction at Ekamra, in fact, appears with the Vaital Deul, a Shakta/Kapalika temple. Even though the decorative programme of the *jagamohana* was never completed, the temple is one of the most beautiful of all Orissan structures. In contrast to the eerie atmosphere of the dark interior dominated by the terrifying Kapalini (Chamunda), the exterior walls of the sanctum depict a lush paradise of resplendent

6

Bhubaneswar:
Parashurameshvara temple;
general view from the
southwest. Second quarter
of 7th century. Photograph:
Thomas Donaldson.





7

Bhubaneswar: Vaital Deul;
kanya applying cosmetics;
 paga niche 66.5 cm high.
 Late 8th century.
 Photograph: Jessica
 Donaldson.

beauty peopled by beautiful females, *mithunas* (amorous couples), and meandering creepers carved in a warm, red sandstone. The *alasa-kanyas* (maidens), enticing and seductive in pose, languish in leisure activities associated with women and, ever conscious of their charm, are lost in self-absorption (figure 7).

Despite this absorption in everyday mundane activities, however, their sanctity is often punctuated by the addition of haloes.

Although the official faith of the Somavamshi-kesaris was Shaivism they were cosmopolitan in their religious outlook and retained the conventions that had acquired

religious sanction during the preceding centuries. They appear to have been tolerant of all sects as they installed the *saptamatrika* on the bank of the Markandeshvara tank and revived the shrine of Jagannath at Puri, had Jain images carved in caves on Khandagiri hill, and it was during their hegemony that building activities were revived at Buddhist establishments and Chausat Yogini *pithas* were constructed at Ranipur-Jharial and Hirapur. They are best known, however, as the builders of the greatest Shaiva temples at Ekamra, including the Mukteshvara, the Rajarani, the Brahmeshvara, and the Lingaraja in addition to the Gauri, the latter a Shakta temple of the *khakhara* order. An inscribed slab originally attached to the Brahmeshvara temple informs us that it was built by Kolavati, mother of Uddyota-kesari, in the latter's 18th regnal year (circa 1058 CE) at a place known as Siddha-tirtha in Ekamra.¹⁷ In various other inscriptions and texts such as the *Ekamra-chandrika* and the *Svarnadrimahodaya*, Ekamra is likewise described as a Siddha-tirtha having eight holy centres.

The earliest of these major temples is the small Gauri temple, dating to the second

quarter of the 10th century, though only its *deul* (sanctum with superstructure) has survived. It is one of the earliest temples in coastal Orissa to incorporate new architectural features filtering in from the upper Mahanadi valley homeland of the new rulers. The staggered projections of the *pagas* (vertical wall elements), influenced by stellate designs, produce a lozenge-shaped plan (figure 8). The corner *pagas* are designed as engaged pillars decorated with a *kanya* or *mithuna* carved in high-relief while the niches of the *raha*- (centre) and *anartha*- (intermediate) *pagas* are reduced in size by the addition of multiple mouldings in their crowning element. The recess between the *raha*- and *anartha*-*pagas* on the longer west side are filled with a *naga-stambha* (serpent pillar). These new features are best integrated with the indigenous tradition on the slightly later Mukteshvara temple. Though small in size, it has been aptly described as "the gem of Orissan architecture",¹⁸ a monument in which sculpture and architecture are in complete harmony with each other. The terraced, flat roof of the rectangular *jagamohana* of earlier temples is here replaced by a pyramidal roof of receding steps. The *jangha* or wall portion of both the



8
Bhubaneswar: Gauri temple; southwest view showing staggered projection of *pagas*. Second quarter of 10th century. Photograph: Thomas Donaldson.



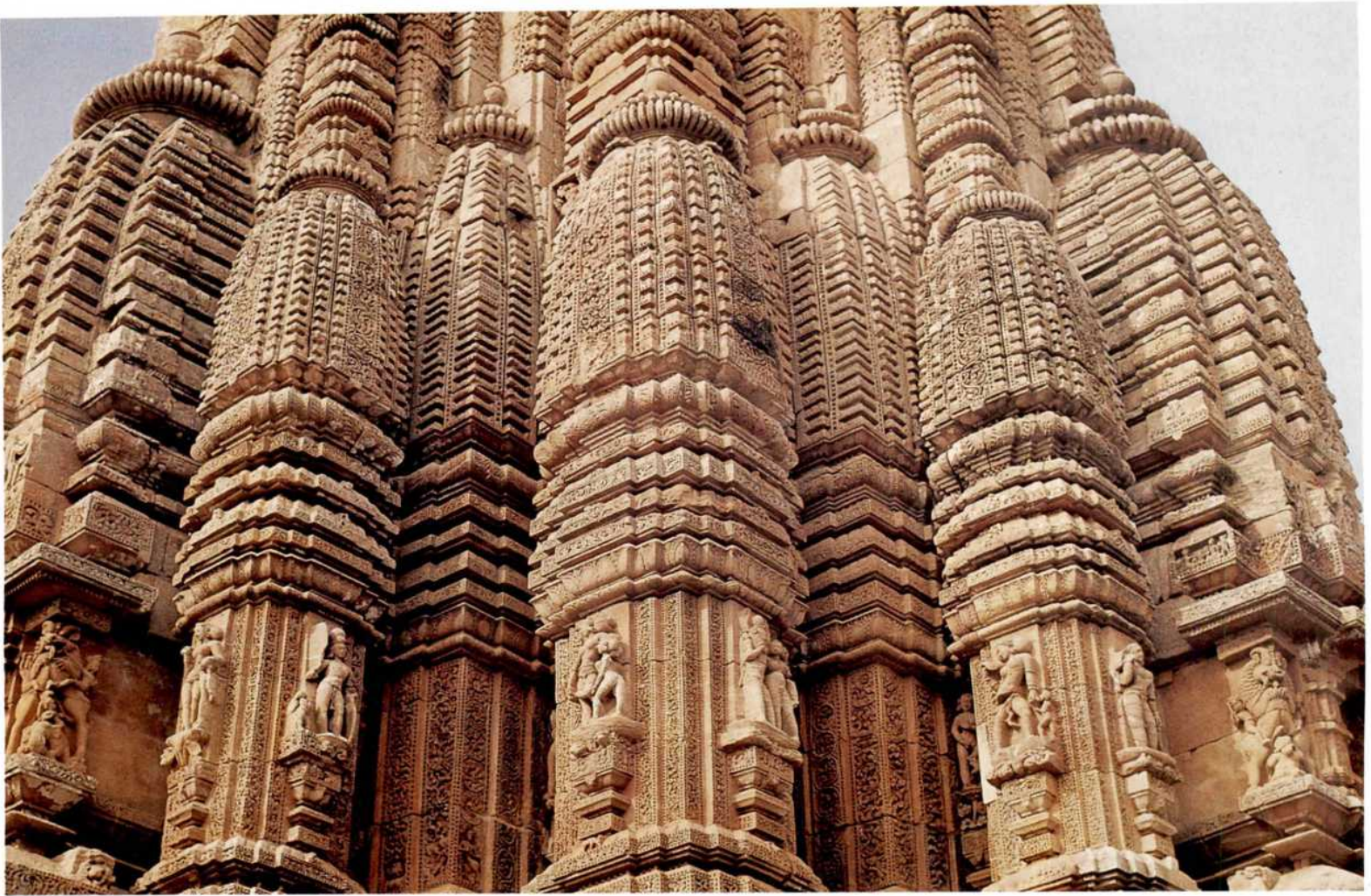
9

Bhubaneswar: Mukteshvara temple; general view from the south. Mid-10th century. Photograph: Thomas Donaldson.

jagamohana and *deul* have similar decorative programmes, however, dominated by *kanyas* carved in high-relief, serpent pillars, and niches crowned by tall spires of multiple mouldings simulating miniature shrines. The reticulated scroll designs with interlacing ribbons appear like lacework suspended in front of the walls and help to produce a unifying harmony in the overall design. The interior ceiling of the *jagamohana* is beautifully carved and coffered, a rare feature on Orissan temples which are extremely dark within. The temple is fronted by a *torana* and is surrounded by a low compound wall. Rather than serving as an exemplar for further architectural development, as might be expected with the new rulers firmly entrenched, the Mukteshvara serves instead as the culmination of an artistic epoch (figure 9). The new trend will be towards increased height and monumentality. *Paga* designs

become increasingly standardized and ornamental richness is produced primarily through the constant repetition of nearly identical decorative units.

For a brief period at the beginning of the 11th century new features and motifs introduced primarily from central India were employed in a bold and dramatic way which, only partially assimilated with indigenous traditions, lend an exotic look to the temples. Included among the innovations is a two-storey design with the recesses between the *pagas* being filled with a *virala* (leonine) motif on the lower storey and *kanya* or *mithuna* motifs on the upper storey. The most conspicuous innovation, though short-lived, is the addition of a cluster of *anga-shikharas* (miniature turrets) on the curvilinear spire which project sharply from the silhouette. The temple which best integrates these *anga-shikharas* into the overall design is the



Rajarani (figure 10). The multiple offsets of the *pagas* produce a lozenge-shaped groundplan with serrated edges. The offsets are decorated with lush scrollwork which serves to isolate each figure carved on the centre facet. The figures on the lower storey of the corner *pagas* are *dikpalas* (figure 11) while most of the other figures are *kanyas*. These sculptures, both male and female, are exquisite in beauty and grace and are generally considered to be unparalleled in the history of plastic art in Orissa. The cult deities in the *raha* niches have not survived and the decoration of the *jagamohana* was left unfinished.

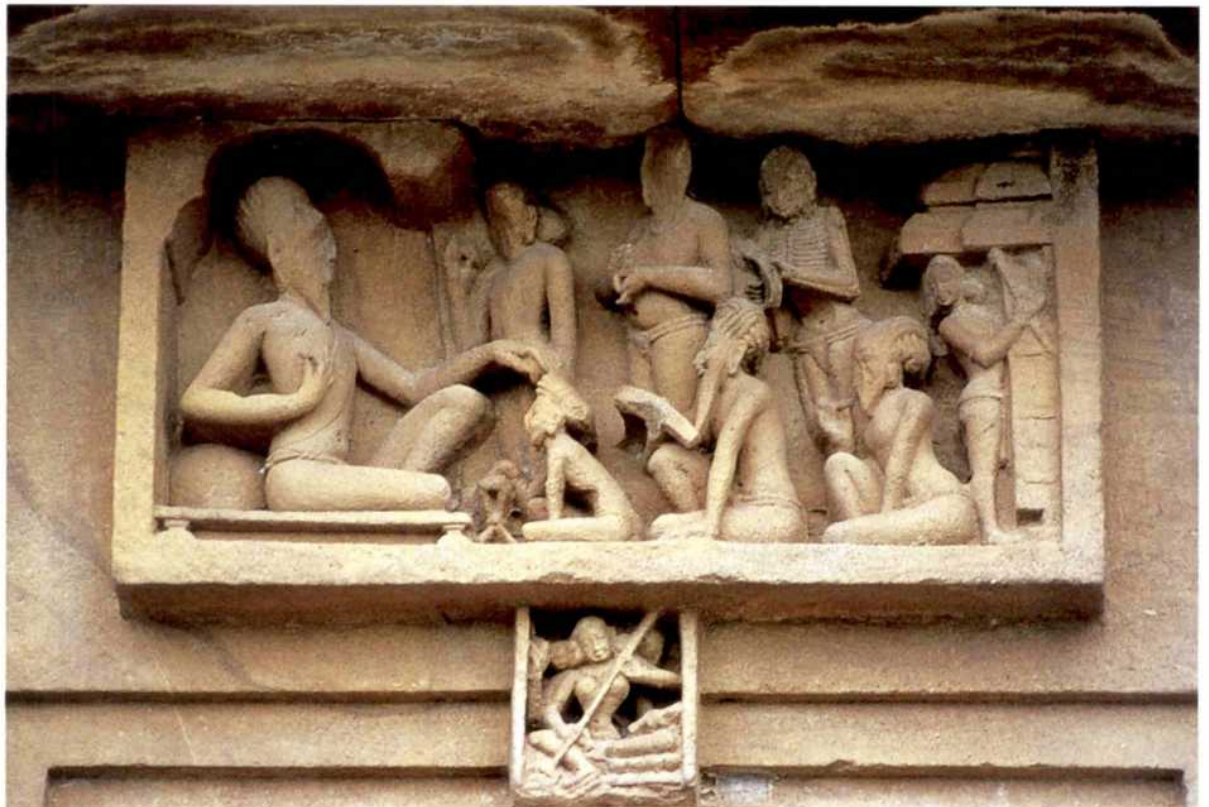
It is on the Brahmeshvara temple that these innovations are modified and completely assimilated with indigenous traditions to set the course for the ensuing evolution of the Orissan temple. The corner and intermediate *pagas* are identical in design, the lower storey being a *khakhara-mundi* and the upper storey a *pidha-mundi*, i.e., types of miniature shrines. The *dikpalas* appear in the lower storey

niches of the corner *pagas* while various aspects of Shiva appear in lower storey niches of the intermediate *pagas*. The niches of the upper storey of both *pagas* house primarily *kanyas* or *mithunas*. Although the *raha* niches are empty, the lintel above contains the *shikshadana* motif (figure 12) of a guru dispensing instructions to his disciples. A related motif of a king surrounded by his ministers appears on a panel over the *gavaksha* (transept) window on the south side of the *jagamohana* while on the north side this panel is decorated with a girl dancing within a temple, the latter probably alluding to the devadasis presented to the temple by Kolavati. The decorative programme of the four corner shrines is dominated by erotic and secular motifs, a trend which becomes increasingly popular on later temples and is reflected in the opening verses of the copper-plate grants of the Somavamshi rulers which extol the pursuit of love, their domain being visualized as the pleasure garden of Kama. This emphasis on the erotic and the increased

10
Bhubaneswar: Rajarani temple; exotic use of *anga-shikharas* to crown upward thrust of *pagas* and recesses. Early 11th century. Photograph: Jessica Donaldson.



11
Bhubaneswar: Rajarani temple; *dikpala* Varuna; high-relief 91.5 cm high. Early 11th century. Photograph: Jessica Donaldson.



12
Bhubaneswar: Brahmeshvara temple; *shikshadana* motif. Circa 1058 CE. Photograph: Jessica Donaldson.

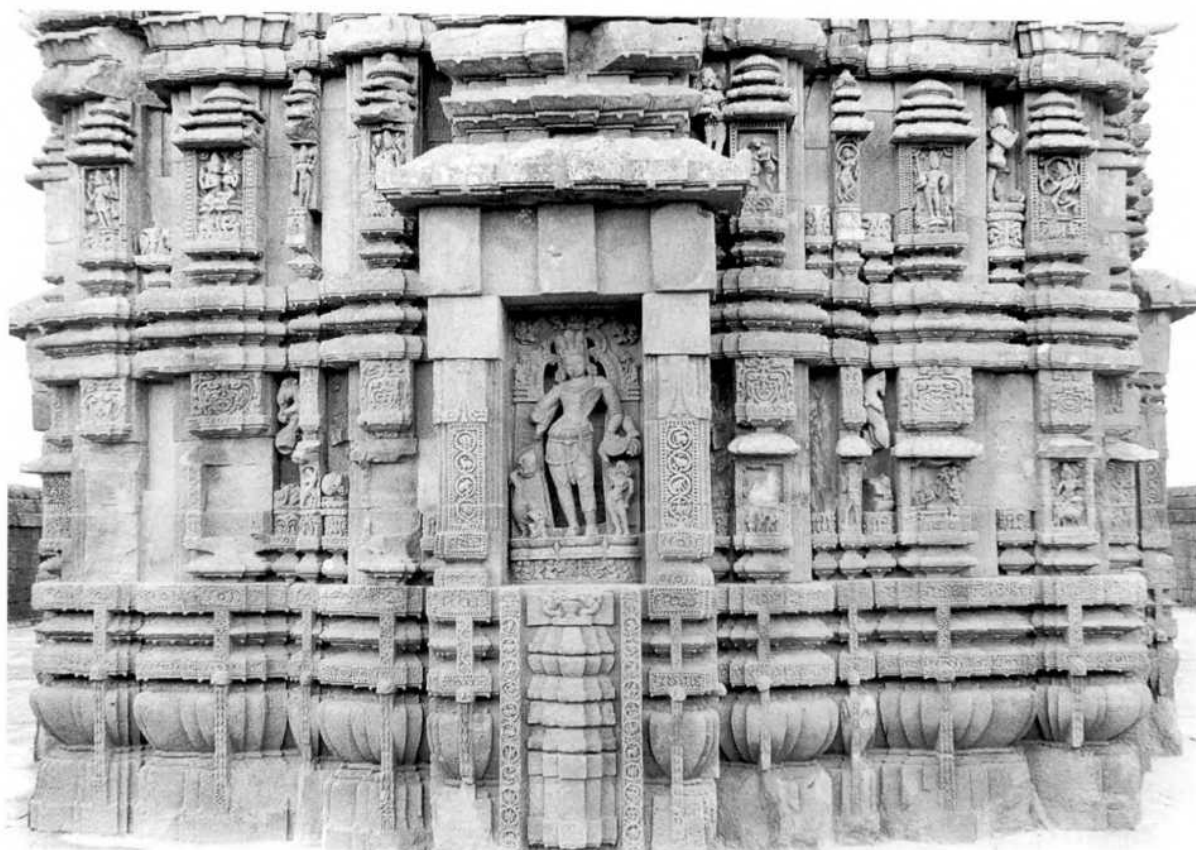
importance of the guru testify to the growing influence of the Kaulachara sect of Tantrism.¹⁹

The largest temple at Ekamra, referred to by Fergusson as "the most majestic of the Indo-Aryan styles" and as perhaps "the finest example of a purely Hindu temple in India",²⁰

is the Lingaraja. Its elegant and graceful spire soars to a height of about 45 metres (figure 13). It stands in a spacious compound which is crowded with nearly a hundred shrines of various size and date. Stylistically the temple is similar to the Brahmeshvara, though larger



13
Bhubaneswar: Lingaraja temple; *gandi* (spire) with *anga-shikharas* aligned vertically and confined to the *anartha-pagas*. Third quarter of 11th century. Photograph: Thomas Donaldson.



in size and more ornate in decoration. With all of the features fully evolved it is the culmination, after a long evolutionary process, of the architectural movement at Ekamra. Secularization of figure motifs noticed on the Brahmeshvara is greatly expanded as the lower storey niches of the *anartha* (intermediate) *pagas* all house themes involving the king or a guru. The upper storey niches house various gods of the Brahmanical pantheon while the recesses contain *kanyas*, *yoginis* (ogresses or sorceresses), and *dakinis* (female imps or goblins). Though the most famous Shaiva temple in Orissa, its Svayambhu-linga, invoked as Hari-Hara by the priests, is offered in daily worship leaves of *vilva* and *tulasi*, the favourites of Shiva and Vishnu respectively, the pillar erected in front of the *bhoga-mandapa* (hall of offering) is surmounted by the respective mounts of Shiva and Vishnu, and an image of Lakshmi-Narayana is housed on the north side of the *bhoga-mandapa* to suggest the cosmopolitan nature of the temple complex.

In the early years of Ganga rule the temples built at Ekamra are primarily conservative in design and only partially decorated while some of the most ancient

shrines are renovated or reconstructed, suggesting an attempt to endear the new rulers with the indigenous populace. The culmination of this transitional period is achieved with the Jagannath temple at Puri. By the end of the 12th century a new phase is initiated which is marked by excessive experimentation.

The changes introduced, however, are more in the form of elaboration of existing motifs rather than architectural innovations, an elaboration which often produces a rather crowded effect in the decorative programme. The most notable changes are the increased number of *pagas* on the walls and the proliferation of *tala-garbhika* (miniature shrine) designs in the base mouldings, the latter feature somewhat obscuring the horizontal clarity of this lowest division of the temple. The best representative of this phase at Bhubaneswar is the Megheshvara temple with its abbreviated *nava-ratha* (nine *pagas* on each side) plan, the *pagas* and their offsets being of various widths (figure 14).

By the 13th century this excessive experimentation gradually subsides and is replaced by an overall standardization in the decorative programme, though there are

always slight variations from temple to temple. The wide recesses separating the *pagas* become splayed and are filled with similar vertical elements. Secular motifs become even more prevalent and vie with cult images for dominance. The *nata-mandira* (dance hall) becomes a standard feature on the east-west axis, being added even to earlier temples, and suggests that the temple precincts were being utilized even more for non-religious purposes. Among the more successful temples of the 13th century at Bhubaneswar are the Sari Deul, the Yameshvara, the Chitrakarini, and the Ananta-Vasudeva, the last a testimony to the increasing importance of Vaishnavism throughout Orissa at this time. In respect to Shakta patronage throughout the Ganga period, rather than constructing temples to independent goddesses, emphasis was primarily placed on providing consorts to all male deities, including the *dikpalas*; or temples dedicated to the consort of a deity were erected within the same compound, as in the case of the Parvati temple erected in the compound of the Lingaraja. Although there is some Buddhist activity in isolated areas of Orissa, for the most part patronage subsides and there are even a few unsubstantiated accounts in the *Chaitanya Bhagavata* and the *Madala Panji* (late chronicle of the Jagannath temple) suggesting that some Ganga kings may have persecuted Buddhists. The latter part of the Ganga period was one of continuous warfare against the Muslims. Although the temples continue the style as evolved over the preceding centuries, there is steady decline in quality and an increasing lack of decorative detail. With the decline of the Ganga supremacy and royal patronage, the creative force of the Orissan artist becomes rapidly exhausted, particularly in respect to temple construction. Much of the energy appears to have been devoted to adding structures to existing temples.

With respect to inscriptions and textual accounts, by the 14th century the epithets of Bhuvaneshvara (abridged form of Tribhuvaneshvara) and Lingaraja replaced that of Krittivasa in popularity for the presiding

deity and his temple at Ekamra. As evident in gazetteer literature in non-Orissan texts such as the *Shaktisangama Tantra*, it is only since the late 16th century that Ekamra was replaced by Bhuvaneshvara as the place name for the temple town.²¹ Although many of its temples "have long succumbed to the destructive forces of nature, standing ones of all sizes even now exist literally in hundreds."²² Even though the construction of the modern state capital at Bhubaneswar may have obfuscated somewhat the beauty and sublime grandeur of its soaring temples, it is still pre-eminently a temple town.

NOTES

- 1 Quoted by Karuna S. Behera, "Brahmanical Temples of Orissa", *Orissa Review: Monument Special*, ed. A.N. Tiwari, Cuttack, 1976, p. 55.
- 2 William W. Hunter, *Orissa: or the Vicissitudes of an Indian Province under Native and British Rule*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1872, p. 4.
- 3 *Brahma Purana*, trans. "A Board of Scholars", ed. J.L. Shastri, Vol. 1, Delhi, 1985-86, pp. 140-45, 230-40.
- 4 Rajendra Lal Mitra, *The Antiquities of Orissa*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1963 reprint of 1880 edition, pp. 105-08, 165.
- 5 Debala Mitra, *Bronzes from Achutrajpur, Orissa*, Delhi, 1978, pp. 6-7.
- 6 Rakhal Das Banerji, "Inscriptions in the Udayagiri and Khandagiri Caves", *Epigraphia Indica*, XIII, 1915-16, pp. 159-67.
- 7 Vasudeva S. Agrawala, "Vasavadatta and Sakuntala Scenes in the Ranigumpha Cave of Orissa", *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, XIV, 1946, pp. 102-09.
- 8 Pratapaditya Pal, *Hindu Religion and Iconology According to the Tantrasara*, Los Angeles, 1981, p. 147.
- 9 Manmohan Gangoly, *Orissa and Her Remains*, Calcutta, 1912, p. 137.
- 10 Kedarnath Mahapatra, "A Note on the Hypaethral Temple of Sixty-four Yoginis at Hirapür", *Orissa Historical Research Journal (OHRJ)*, II, no. 2, 1953, pp. 23-24.
- 11 R.L. Mitra, op. cit., II, pp. 115-16; and Krishna C. Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar*, Calcutta, 1961, pp. 221-22.

- 12 Snigda Tripathy, "Ekamra – Bhubanesvara", *OHRJ*, XXXIII, no. 1/2, 1987, p. 144.
- 13 James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1972 reprint of 1910 revised edition, p. 96; see also Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture: Buddhist and Hindu Periods*, Bombay, 1965, p. 101.
- 14 See Thomas Donaldson, "Individual Styles & Workshop Participation in the Early Temples of Bhubaneswar", *Chhavi II*, ed. Anand Krishna, Varanasi, 1982, pp. 80–91.
- 15 Anirudha Das, "Asanapat", *OHRJ*, XIII, no. 2, 1965, p. 5.
- 16 S. Tripathy, op. cit., p. 141.
- 17 Sarada Prasad Cakravarty, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, VII, 1837, pp. 557–62; R.L. Mitra, op. cit., II, pp. 150–52; and K.C. Panigrahi, op. cit., pp. 41–47.
- 18 J. Fergusson, op. cit., II, p. 97.
- 19 See Thomas Donaldson, "Erotic Rituals on Orissan Temples", *East and West*, 36, nos. 1–3, 1986, pp. 162–64.
- 20 J. Fergusson, op. cit., II, pp. 99, 105.
- 21 S. Tripathy, op. cit., pp. 149–50.
- 22 Debala Mitra, *Bhubaneswar*, New Delhi, 1961, p. 4.



Jajpur (Viraja-kshetra) and Shakta Art

Thomas Eugene Donaldson

As elsewhere in India, the worship of the female principle in the form of a Divine Mother appears very early in Orissa, particularly among the tribals where non-Aryan elements predominated, as with the Savaras and the Pulindas who were inhabitants in the forest area of Mahendragiri. One of the earliest references appears in line six of Rock Edict XIII of Ashoka which alludes to this type of worship by the Atavikas who lived in the forest regions of Kalinga.¹ Even today the Divine Mother, usually in the form of a post or pillar, is worshipped in virtually every forest (*atavi*) in Orissa. As in the case of Shiva (Sthanu), the worship of the goddess (Shakti) in the form of a log of wood, a post, or a stone pillar (*stambha*) most likely evolved from primitive tree worship. In Orissa this form of the Divine Mother is often designated as Stambheshvari (Khambeshvari). The earliest epigraphical reference to a tribal goddess in Orissa appears in a 3rd-century CE inscription at Bhadrak where donations were given to a sylvan goddess named Parnnadavadi (leaf-clad goddess).² By the Gupta period, possibly influenced by the south Indian campaigns of Samudragupta, the primitive forms of the Divine Mother become gradually "Hinduized". In the Mahakantara or Mahavana (great forest) area of Kalahandi district, for example, the earlier tree-trunk or *stambha* form of the Mother Goddess now becomes identified with

Ishvari (Uma), as mentioned in a set of copper-plates found near Terasinga on the Tel river. The plates refer to Bhagavati Stambheshvari as the tutelary deity of Maharaja Tustikara.³ Throughout the Bhaumakara period (circa 736–950 CE) many of the feudatory rulers were devout followers of tribal cult-deities such as Stambheshvari, including the Sulkis, the Gonds, and the Tungas. Even the Khinjali Bhanjas, devout worshippers first of Shiva and then of Vishnu, remained devoted to Stambheshvari.

Some of the later Bhaumakara rulers were also devoted to Shaktism, including Tribhuvana-mahadevi who, in her Dhenkanal plates, compares herself to Katyayani (Durga) at the time of her coronation.⁴ Still others, such as Dandi-mahadevi, style themselves as "*Paramamaheshvari, Paramabhattacharya, Maharajadhiraja, and Parameshvari*". Shaktism was particularly popular throughout the 10th century and quite likely the major patrons were the last Bhauma rulers who were all female. It is equally probable that the earliest Somavamshi rulers continued this patronage to help endear themselves to the indigenous population and to secure or strengthen their rule. Though Shaivas by faith, they patronized Shaktism on a large scale during the early years of their rule. That they were also devoted to Shaktism prior to their hegemony over eastern Orissa is evident by the fact that

the presiding deity of their early capital at Suvarnapura (Sonepur) was Bhagavati Panchambari Bhadrabika as mentioned in the Maranjamura charter of Yayati II (circa 1025–40 CE).⁵ In the Brahmeshvara temple inscription Yayati's second name is recorded as Chandihara, a fact which has led some scholars to assume that he was a devout worshipper of both Chandi and Hara. Somewhat earlier, according to the *Madala Panji*, Bhima-kesari, i.e. Bhimaratha (circa 955–980 CE), a great worshipper of Devi, installed seven sisters on the eastern side of the Markandeshvara tank at Puri. These sisters most likely refer to *matrikas*.

Although various sources suggest that the Ganga kings, in particular Chodaganga (1077–1147 CE), appear not to have favoured or patronized the worship of Shakti, that the later Ganga rulers were favourably disposed towards Shaktism is implied in the addition of

the title “Durgaputra” to their previous titles of “Purushottama” and “Rudraputra”, initiated by Anangabhimadeva III (1211–38 CE).⁶ That Narasimhadeva I (1238–64 CE) continued this tradition is apparent in four sculptures from Konark which depict him worshipping a trinity consisting of a Shiva-linga, Purushottama, and Durga. Shakta elements likewise play a role in two later trinities, a Krishna trinity in which the goddess Subhadra/Ekanamsa is flanked by Krishna and Baladeva, and the wooden Jagannath trinity whereby the goddess Subhadra is flanked by Balabhadra and Jagannath, each deity being represented in a primitive pillar-like form. It is also during the Ganga period that temples dedicated to the Devi were constructed in the compound of earlier temples dedicated to their consort, though this is merely the culmination of a continuous tradition which dates back to as early as the 8th century.

1

Bhubaneswar: Parvati temple; general view from south. 13th century. Photograph: American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon.



That the later Gajapati kings continued to worship Shakti is evident in numerous inscriptions, as in the Garhpada grant of Purushottamadeva (1467–97 CE) where Jaya-Durga is invoked.⁷ He is also described as a devout worshipper of Durga in the prologue of his *Abhinava Venisamharanam* while in the story of the Kanchi-Kaveri expedition he is intimately associated with the goddess Manikeshvari (Maninageshvari) for whom he possibly constructed a temple near Chilika lake. His preceptor, Godavara Mishra compiled a treatise on the worship of Durga during Dasahara⁸ while Sarala Dasa glorified the Devi in his 15th-century *Chandi Purana*. Testimony to the great popularity of Shaktism in the 16th century appears in the description of a court held by Jagannath in the *Bata Abakasa* of Balarama Dasa, which was attended by all the deities of Orissa. Whereas 26 Shiva delegates and 16 Vishnu delegates attended the conference, there were 76 Shakta goddesses.⁹ Many of these goddesses, such as *yoginis*, represented local cults whereby the Devi is worshipped under different names.

There seems little doubt that royal patronage of Shaktism diminished in the Ganga and subsequent periods in comparison to the Bhauma and Somavamshi periods, the surviving Shakta images being much smaller in size. Aside from consort temples such as the Parvati (figure 1) at Bhubaneswar and the Lakshmi at Puri, the only major surviving Shakta temple is the Gangeshvari at Beyalisbati, though numerous detached Shakta images scattered throughout the countryside suggest that there must have been more, even if modest in size. With the increasing popularity of Vaishnava sects, eventually that of Jagannath being elevated to the state religion, royal patronage of Shaktism became absorbed by Vaishnavism. Images of Durga were often housed in the sanctum with Madhava, Lakshmi invariably became associated with Narasimha, while in the cult of Purushottama the deity was always worshipped together with his Shakti, the latter being transformed into Subhadra in the cult of

Jagannath which absorbed all of the religious cults into itself. Patronage for individual Shakta deities thus must have been carried out on a lower level, a fact which probably led to an even greater diversity in respect to local names of the Devi.

VIRAJA-KSHETRA

Viraja (Jajpur) is the primary centre for the worship of the Devi. As an old and prominent *pitha* of Shaktism its history goes back at least as early as the *Mahabharata* (Vana-parva, 83.6; 114.5–25) where it was considered as the primary *kshetra* or holy place in Orissa that attracted pilgrims from northern India. According to tradition current at Jajpur, Brahma celebrated the horse sacrifice ten times over on the left bank of the Baitarani and the place thereupon obtained the name of Yajnapura, or “the city of sacrifices”. In the course of these sacrifices, there sprang from the flaming altar an embodiment of the divine mother Durga in the form of Viraja, the “immaculate”, and in honour of her the place is called Viraja-kshetra.¹⁰ In the *Brahma Purana* (40.1–12) the city, the goddess, and the Baitarani river are all eulogized by Brahma. In the Gayasura episode in the *Vayu Purana* (II.44.85–86), repeated in the *Virajamahatmya* of the *Skanda Purana*, the head of the slain titan remained buried at Gaya, his navel at Viraja, and his feet extended as far as Mahendra mountain.

In the Shakta concept of the origin of the *pithas* the navel of Sati is also frequently associated with Viraja, as in the *Pithanirnaya* where the goddess Vimala and Lord Jagannath are the presiding deities of Viraja-kshetra, *pitha* no. 10.¹¹ In the 16th-century *Chandi-mangala* of the Bengali poet Mukundarama, in contrast, the right foot of Sati fell at Viraja. Other texts mentioning Viraja as a Shakta *pitha* include the *Kubjika Tantra* where it is no. 26; the *Brihannila Tantra*; the *Jnanarnava Tantra* where it is no. 28; the *Pranatosani Tantra* where Viraja is referred to as Yagapuri; and the *Brahmanda Purana* (Lm. 44.93–100) where it is *pitha* no. 26. Viraja is mentioned in various 6th- and

Jajpur: Trilochaneshvara
Mahadeva temple
compound; eighteen-armed
Chamunda. 8th century.
196.8 x 91.5 cm.
Photograph:
Jessica Donaldson.



7th-century copper-plates, being the capital of Unmatta-kesari, while under the Bhaumakaras, Guhadevapataka or Guheshvarapataka became the capital and it was the name the new rulers applied to Viraja or a new city built by them in its vicinity. When the Somavamshikesaris conquered eastern Orissa they shifted their capital from the upper Mahanadi valley to Guheshvarapataka, which was renamed Abhinava-Yayatinagara (new city of Yayati). Although it lost some of its political prestige when the Gangas shifted the capital to Abhinava-Varanasi (Chaudwar), it continued to be a focal point of Shakta worship into later times. Unfortunately, due to its continued prominence as a political centre, as well as its importance as a holy *tirtha*, even into the Gajapati period (16th century), Orissa itself even being referred to as the kingdom of Jainagar in Muslim accounts, the city became the greatest victim of iconoclasm and vandalism so that very little survives in the way of architecture. There are enough sculptural fragments, however, to attest to its past glory and the magnificence of its cultural heritage.

The present temple of Viraja is of recent origin and is enclosed within a large compound containing detached images from earlier temples including the original Viraja temple constructed about a mile away at Kalasapur. Although various scholars ascribe the image of Viraja to the Gupta period, it is concealed by clothes and thus unavailable for inspection. Apparently the Devi is two-armed while the demon is in theriomorphic form. Many other images within the compound can be dated to the 7th–8th centuries.

The best surviving testimonies to Shaktism from the 8th–9th centuries are the images in the compound of the later Trilochaneshvara Mahadeva temple. At the front is an impressive image of an emaciated Bhairava or Chamunda seated on a corpse. On the pedestal is an inscription which reads that this image was the “fame-producing work” of Vatsadevi, most likely a Bhauma queen.¹² Equally gruesome is a ten-armed Chamunda loosely placed within the compound, though



the most impressive is an eighteen-armed Chamunda housed in a small shrine. The latter, still in active worship, is referred to by the local priests as Kali (figure 2).

Testimony to the artistic grandeur of the Somavamshi-kesaris, and to their patronage of Shaktism, are the three colossal *matrika* images which were removed to the compound of the subdivisional officer in 1866. The images were found by A. Stirling at the back of the high terrace supporting the cenotaph of the Muslim saint Saiyid Bukhari, lying with their heels uppermost on a heap of rubbish "in precisely the same position apparently that they assumed when tumbled from their thrones above".¹³ According to tradition there were originally eight mothers, the five missing ones being broken down by the Muslims for balls and shots for their guns.¹⁴ In the *Madala Panji* it is recorded that Chakrakesarin, a king

of the Somavamshi dynasty, erected a temple of eight Chandis and it is quite plausible that this refers to this temple at Jajpur, the political capital of the Somavamshi rulers. Equally impressive and better preserved, though smaller, are the *matrikas* housed in a modern shrine on the Dasashvamedha ghat on the left bank of the Baitarani. Originally there were probably eight mothers in this set, as suggested by the inclusion of the gruesome Dantura (figure 3).

Other Shakta images within the environs include one of Ashtikajaratkaru and one of Chamunda in the compound of the Siddheshvara temple and a dancing Chamunda or Bhairava in the compound of the later Varaha temple. Among the more impressive images in the immediate vicinity of Jajpur is a large Umamaheshvaramurti within the Khilateshvara temple at Khadipada and a ten-armed Mahishamardini in the sanctum of the Mangala temple at Kuaus. Although the Dakshina-Chandi temple at Taranga is mostly destroyed, the presiding deity, an eight-armed Chamunda flanked by acolytes, and one of the *parshvadevatas*, an emaciated dancing Bhairava, have survived.

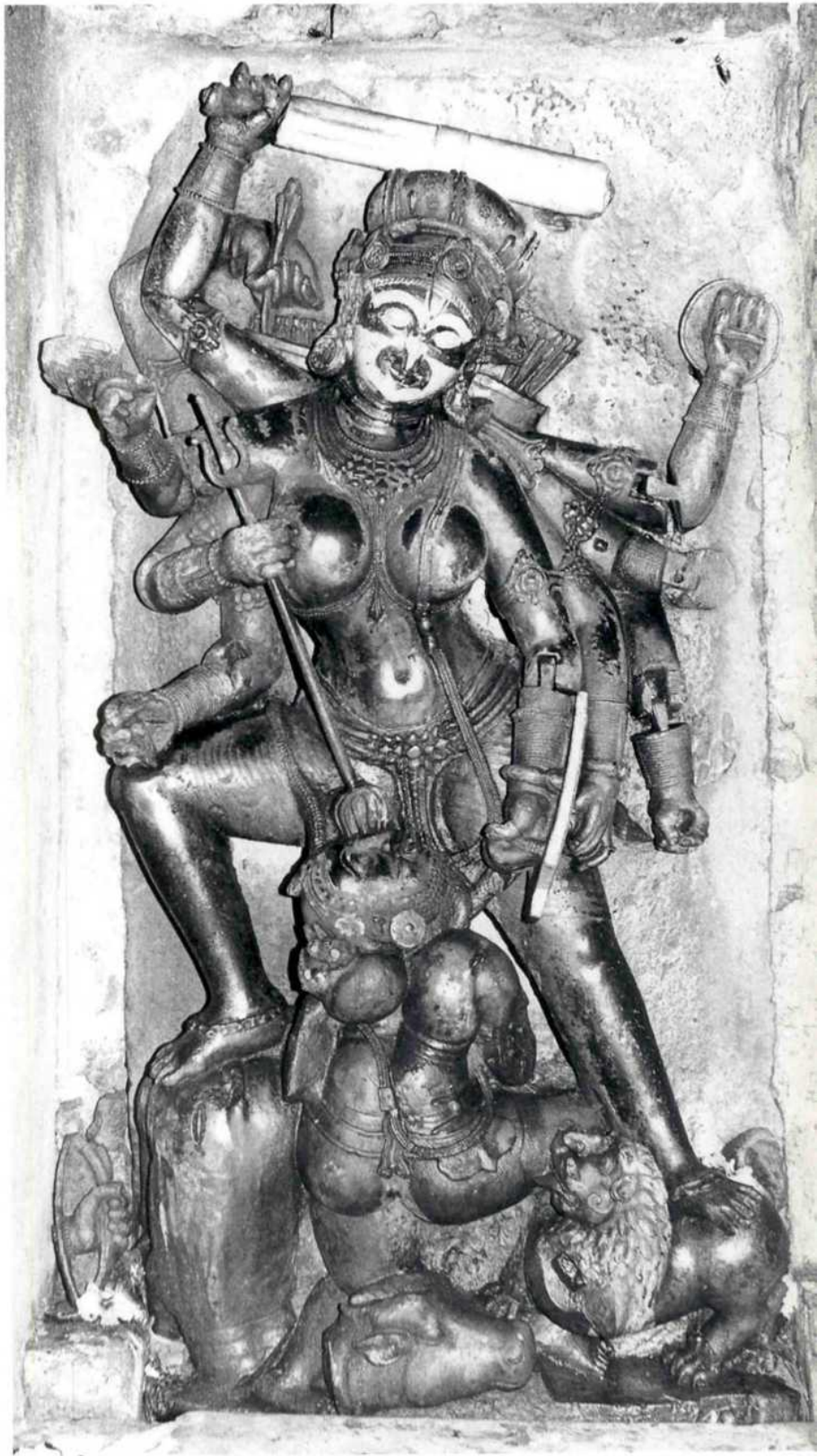
DEVI AS SHAKTI AND PRESIDING DEITY

Shaktism permeates the entire countryside of Orissa and the worship of the Devi is particularly sanctified, whether she serves as a *gramadevata*, *ishtadevata*, or *rashttradevata*, in aniconic or anthropomorphic form, singly or in a group. In addition to the image of Parvati or Mahishamardini as a *parshvadevata* in the north *raha* niche of Shaiva shrines where, along with Ganesha on the south and Kartikeya on the back, she forms part of the holy family of Shiva, a separate image of the Devi, conceived as the Shakti (energy) of Shiva, was often placed in a special shrine on the north side of the compound, or was placed within the *jagamohana*, a practice which culminates in the 13th century with the construction of the Parvati and Lakshmi temples as mentioned. The earliest images, dating to the 8th–10th centuries, usually

3
Jajpur: Dasashvamedha ghat; Dantura. Late 10th century. 154.9 x 81.3 cm. Photograph: Thomas Donaldson.

4

Mukhalingam:
Madhukeshvara temple;
eight-armed enthroned
Durga in north *khakhara*
shrine. Mid-9th century.
103.0 x 67.3 cm.
Photograph:
Jessica Donaldson.



5

Vatesvara: Bhagavati
temple; ten-armed
Mahishamardini in sanctum.
Late 11th–early 12th
century. 190.5 x 100.3 cm.
Photograph:
Thomas Donaldson.

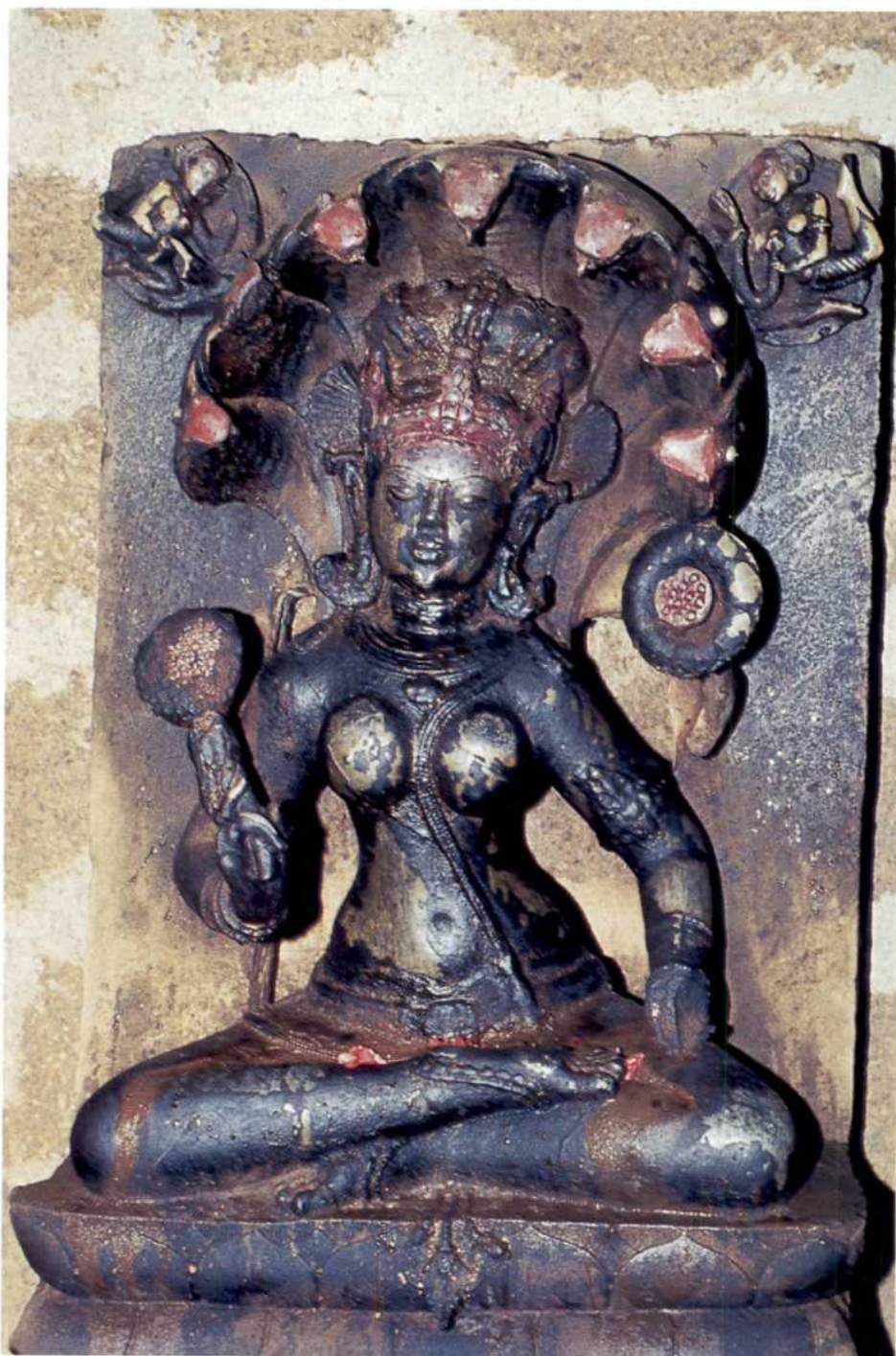
represent Durga seated on a throne (figure 4). The Devi is eight-armed and is seated in *lalitasana* with one leg pendent. In a few cases she assumes a standing pose where she may have up to eighteen arms.

Though there are only a few Mahishamardini images serving as the Shakti in compounds of early Shaiva temples, by the late 10th century her image generally replaces seated images in popularity with the largest appearing in a small shrine in the compound of the Manikeshvara Shiva temple at Sukleshvara. There are numerous examples of her image in the *jagamohana* of 8th–10th-century temples but it is not clear if this was their original placement or if they were *parshvadevata* images shifted there from collapsed Shiva temples. Mahishamardini is the most popular form of the Devi in Orissan sculpture and temples dedicated to her are widespread with one of the earliest being the small *khakhara* temple at Baidesar while one of the largest images appears in the sanctum of the Bhagavati temple at Vatesvara (figure 5). Other forms of Durga accorded special worship include Mangala, who may be represented in anthropomorphic or aniconic form, worshipped particularly for personal prosperity and welfare, including safety in navigation.

An especially popular goddess accorded special worship throughout Orissa is the serpent deity Manasa (Buddhist Janguli), renowned as the possessor of Supreme Knowledge, for the power of counteracting poison, and as a daughter of the Savaras or forest tribes of India. Her popularity thus extends into tribal cultures as well as Buddhism, Shaktism, and Brahmanism, and within the latter she is associated in texts with both Shaiva and Vaishnava sects. Her images may be grouped into two iconographic forms. In her first form she may be seated in *vajraparyanka* with legs crossed, whereby she holds a vessel in front of her chest with both hands, or has a vessel in one hand and a flower in the other, or she is seated in *lalitasana* with one leg pendent and shows a *mudra* while holding a vessel or a serpent. In

two examples at Kenduli she holds a flower in each hand (figure 6). A canopy of serpent hoods frames her head and a lion occasionally appears on her pedestal. More than 60 images of this form of Manasa have been noticed in Orissa. Even more popular with some 80 examples discovered is the second form, *Ashtikajaratkaru*, where she is seated in *lalitasana* cradling a child or a male figure on her lap. In early images her head is framed by a canopy of serpent hoods and the child on her lap represents Ashtika. By the 11th century the serpent canopy is eliminated and a single serpent appears on the pedestal. The figure on her lap is now fully grown and

6
Kenduli: Chandi temple;
Ambalika (*nagini*). Late
11th–early 12th century.
108.0 x 57.5 cm.
Photograph: Jessica
Donaldson.



appears to be dead, or is being revived, suggesting that the image most likely refers to her ability to heal the effects of snake bite and to revive the dead. In lieu of a serpent canopy is a tree spreading above the goddess, most likely the *snuhi* tree associated with the worship of Manasa. In numerous cases there are emaciated rishis on either side of the tree drinking or eating from a *kapala* (skull-cup). Today the image is frequently worshipped as Savitri.

MATRIKA IMAGES

There are thirty-some sets of *matrikas* scattered throughout Orissa with most containing seven *matrikas* along with Virabhadra (or Ekapada) and Ganesha. Although the mothers are characterized as bloodthirsty goddesses of war in literary accounts, in Orissan art they are invariably seated, rather than dancing on the battlefield, and are depicted in pacific form. Except for Varahi and Chamunda, they hold the emblems and ride the vehicle of their male counterparts as prescribed in various texts. The majority of these sets are carved of separate stones and were intended to be housed in a special shrine. In eleven cases they are carved on a single slab or rock escarpment and in only

four cases are they associated with a portal or door frame. In the earliest set they appear as a continuous series in niches on the *jagamohana* of the Parashurameshvara while on the Mukteshvara temple they occupy petals of a lotus design on the ceiling of the *jagamohana*. In two late cases, at Kalarahanga and Beraboi, they serve as *avaranadevatas* in niches of the *deul*. By the late 9th century a child is added to the left thigh (figure 7), except for Chamunda, so that their front right hand shows *abhaya* while the left arm cradles the child. While Kumari or Indrani may occasionally have only two arms, the mothers generally have four arms except for Chamunda who may have up to eight.

Although there are only three surviving *ashtamatrika* sets, including the one in the Vaital Deul, in the set at Beraboi, and in a late set in the Samalai temple at Sonepur, according to tradition the colossal set at Jajpur also had eight mothers, the eighth being Narasimhi. It is probable that the set on the Dasashvamedha ghat also contained eight mothers with the added one being Dantura, a gruesome aspect of Chamunda who is seated on her haunches. The eighth *matrika* in the Vaital Deul, variously identified as Shivaduti, Kaushiki, or the benevolent ego of the



malevolent Chamunda, possibly represents Mahalakshmi, the most popular eighth mother in textual lists. In this image she is beautiful in appearance and holds a trident and a lotus in her two hands. This is the only mother in the set holding a lotus, the primary attribute of Lakshmi. Although she does not hold a vessel as prescribed, the placement of two water vessels on the pedestal, in lieu of a mount, may be a symbolic replacement which additionally suggests Lakshmi who is invariably being bathed with water from vessels held aloft by elephants. The figure sprinkling her with flowers, rather than being a flying *vidyadhara* as on the other *matrika* images, stands on a lotus which issues from her lotus seat as in the case of the elephants who bathe Lakshmi (figure 8). The trident appears as an attribute for Mahalakshmi in various texts.¹⁵ Lakshmi is also associated with the *matrikas* when they are carved on the door frame where she could be perceived as the eighth mother. Mahalakshmi also appears to be the eighth mother at Beraboi while in the



Samalai temple at Sonapur, where they are depicted as warriors riding their mounts into battle, the eighth mother is Narasimhi.

Chamunda and Varahi not only deviate from convention in iconographic details but additionally display more varied forms and are singled out for special worship in temples dedicated to them or serve as *parshva-devatas* on Shakta shrines. Chamunda may also be represented as the consort of Bhairava with both sharing the sanctum or being juxtaposed with one another in the *jagamohana* of a Shaiva shrine. As a presiding deity her number of arms may vary from four to eighteen with eight- and ten-armed images being the most popular (figure 9). She may be seated on a *vishvapadma* (double lotus) issuing from a prostrate corpse or she may be seated directly on the corpse.¹⁶ Rats, jackals, or vultures may be tearing flesh from the corpse. Chamunda has an emaciated body and generally has one left hand in *charcchika* whereby she is licking the blood-soaked little finger (figure 10). An elephant-hide is usually stretched above her head. When sharing the sanctum with Bhairava, or juxtaposed with him, Bhairava is usually standing or dancing on a corpse and may have only four arms. Although there are a few standing or dancing images of Chamunda singled out for special worship, usually when assuming these poses she functions as a *parshvadevata* or an *avaranadevata* in exterior niches.

Temples dedicated to Varahi date particularly to the 10th century, though most are broken and the images are housed in modern shrines, an exception being the well-preserved temple at Chaurasi. Other major temples existed at Banchua, Bhubaneswar, Domagandara, Navendrapur, and Satbhaya, with four nearly identical images sharing the sanctum at the latter site. In all cases the presiding deity is seated, has a boar-head and a massive pot-belly, and, except at Domagandara, is two-armed (figure 11). She holds a fish and a skull-cup in her hands while the back hands of four-armed images carry a club and a noose. She has a *nara-vahana*

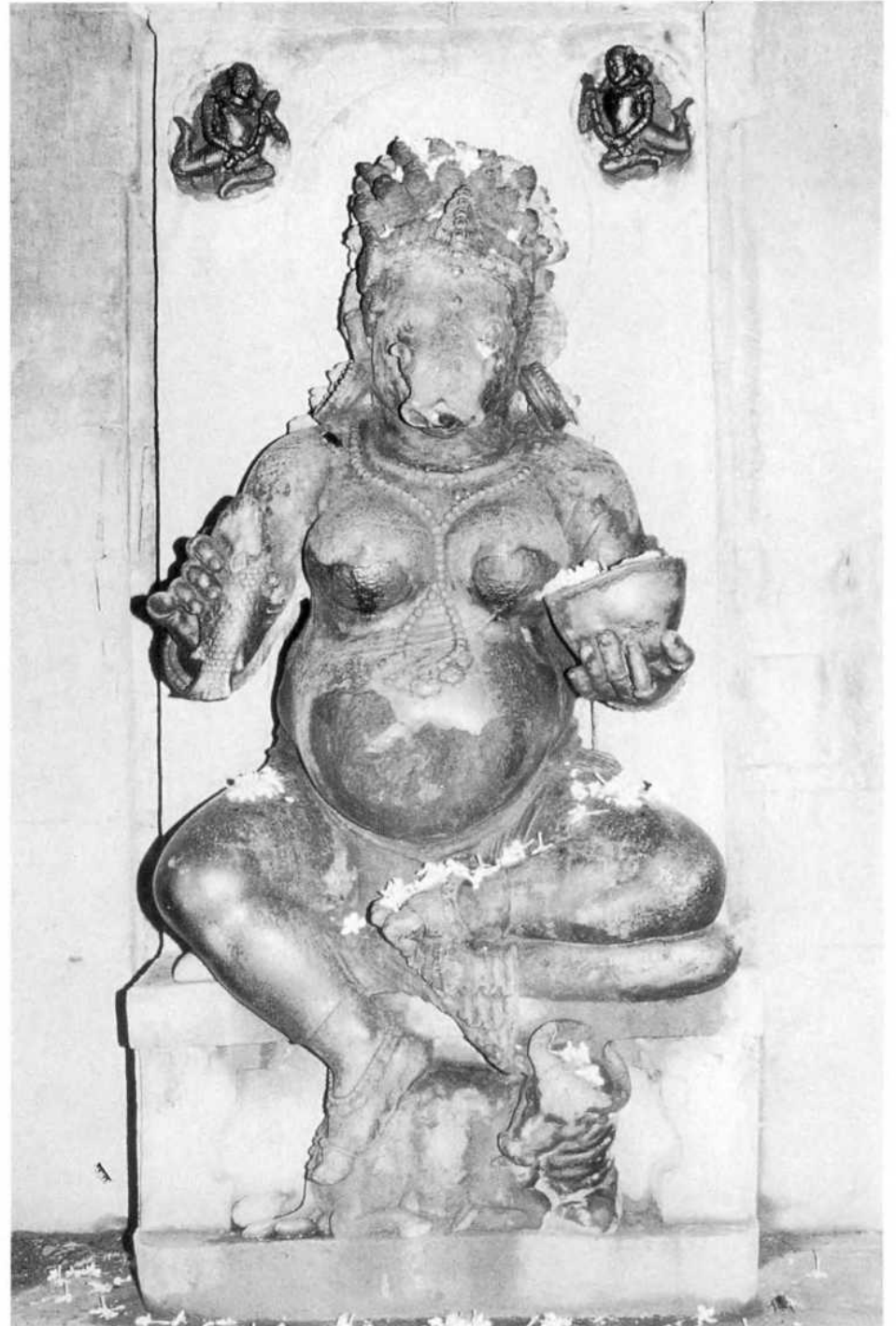
8
Bhubaneswar: Vaital Deul; Mahalakshmi (?) as eighth *matrika* in sanctum. Late 8th century. Photograph: Jessica Donaldson.

9
Kishorpur: Chandi temple; ten-armed Chamunda in sanctum. 10th century. 104.0 x 53.3 cm. Photograph: Jessica Donaldson.





10
Darpani: Kotarakshi temple;
ten-armed Kotarakshi
(Chamunda) in sanctum
(bronze). 15th–16th (?)
century. 42 cm high.
Photograph:
Thomas Donaldson.



11
Chaurasi: Varahi temple;
Varahi in sanctum. Early
10th century. 175.4 x
83.8 cm. Photograph:
Jessica Donaldson.

(human mount) in early images and a buffalo-mount in later images. There are also numerous examples of Varahi in a standing pose, including five housed in niches of Shakta temples.¹⁷ In each case she has an ideal feminine body. Two of these images, dating to the late 10th century, are eight-armed while the other three, dating to the 13th and 14th centuries, are four-armed.

YOGINI, DAKINI, AND MAHAVIDYA IMAGES

The terrifying aspect of Shaktism is best exemplified by two circular, open-aired (hypaeathral) Sixty-four Yogini temples dating to the 10th century, one at Hirapur (figure 12) and the other at Ranipur-Jharial. At Hirapur a four-foot projection on the east serves as the entrance and gives an overall keyhole or yoni shape to the structure. Nine spaced niches on the exterior each house a Katyayani standing above a severed head. A male door guard is on either side of the entrance while an

emaciated Bhairava is on each inside wall of the passageway. Sixty *yoginis* fill niches on the interior wall of the circular structure while four *yoginis*¹⁸ and four Bhairavas fill niches on the Chandi-*mandapa* at the centre of the enclosure. On the temple at Ranipur-Jharial there is no exterior decoration and the entrance on the east is merely an opening in the wall. It is possible that the original entrance was on the south but was later walled up and replaced by a niche housing *yogini* no. 14 (Chamunda), the largest of the *yoginis*, who may have shared the four-pillared centre *mandapa* with Nataraja, the two being placed back to back. Only about 50 of the *yoginis* have survived and they are badly weathered. In contrast to the variety of poses at Hirapur, they assume near identical dancing or displayed postures with heels together and knees apart.

Individual *yoginis*, as well as *dakinis* (goblins), become popular motifs by the mid-10th century on both Shakta and Shaiva

12

Hirapur: Chausat Yogini *pitha*. 10th century.
Photograph:
Jessica Donaldson.



temples, though they are quite small. By the end of the century, on the collapsed Bhimeshvari temple at Pedagadi, they are major motifs, serving as the *parshvadevatas*. Each is four-armed and is seated on a double lotus issuing from the navel of an animal-headed corpse. In the 11th century they often appear in the recesses of the upper storey along with *kanyas* and *mithunas* (amorous couples). In the 16th-century *Bata Abakasa*, mentioned earlier, Lord Jagannath is attended upon by the *saptamatrika*, 64 *yoginis*, and 82 local *dakinis*.

In Orissa the Shakta temple is generally of the *khakhara* order, characterized by an oblong groundplan and an elongated barrel-vaulted roof, so that the number of *avarana-devatas* (surrounding divinities) in intermediate niches is increased from eight to ten. According to various late Shakta texts these niches may be filled with *matrikas* or with *mahavidyas*, female divinities symbolizing stages of transcendental knowledge. In the incipient iconographic programme of the Vaital Deul these niches are filled with *kanyas* or *mithunas* rather than with specific deities. On the 10th-century Varahi temple at Chaurasi, where images of various stages of erotic rituals serve as *avarana-shaktis* on the *deul*, the corner niches of the *jagamohana* house the *dikpalas* (deities of the eight directions) while the adjacent *anartha* niches house their *shaktis*. This is the first appearance of these female aspects in Orissa and they will not appear again for some 200 years. On the longer north and south sides a third *paga* is added on either side of the *gavaksha* (transept) and its niche houses Karttikeya and a Devi on one side while Ganesha and a Devi are on the other side. There are thus ten female figures, each a specific goddess, who serve as precursors to the later development of *mahavidyas*.

The best surviving Shakta iconography programme of the Ganga period appears on the mid-13th century Gangeshvari temple at Beyalisbati. The intermediate niches of both storeys of the *deul* house *avarana-shaktis* (or *mahavidyas*), except for an image of



13
Vatesvara: Bhagavati temple; five-headed, ten-armed Mahabhairavi seated on a corpse (bronze). Late 13th century. 50.8 x 40.6 x 35.6 cm. Photograph: Jessica Donaldson.

Ekapada-Bhairava. These *shaktis* have from four to eight arms and include images of Mahishamardini and Chamunda. Although none of them conforms specifically to later textual descriptions of *mahavidyas*, there is little doubt that they represent an incipient programme showing this later development in its infancy. A similar incipient programme appears in the *Shilpa Prakasha* (l.256–62), a late medieval Orissan Sanskrit text on temple architecture. Although Kali and Tara are the two *mahavidyas* most often singled out for individual worship in later Orissan art, in the Ganga period it is Bhairavi who appears to be most popular, probably due to her association with Bhairava. Included among Orissan images is a six-armed example on the Gangeshvari temple and a five-headed, ten-armed bronze image now housed in the Bhagavati temple at Vatesvara (figure 13).

Beginning in the 14th century the iconographic programme of all temples gradually diminishes so that there are very few temples which have *avarana-devata* images. There are thus no surviving iconographic programmes of Shakta temples

with *avarana-shaktis* between the mid-13th century and the 18th century, by which time the iconography of the ten *mahavidyas* was more or less finalized.

NOTES

- 1 E. Hultzsch, "Inscriptions of Asoka", *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. I, Oxford, 1925, p. 66.
- 2 Kunjabehari Panigrahi, "Bhadra Inscription of Gana", *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXV, No. 3, 1959, pp. 240–43.
- 3 Satyanarayan Rajaguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. I, Part II, Berhampur, 1958, pp. 195–96.
- 4 Binayak Misra, *Orissa under the Bhauma Kings*, Calcutta, 1934, p. 30.
- 5 B.C. Mazumdar, "Maranja-Mura Charter of Mahasivagupta *alias* Yayati", *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. II, 1916, p. 58.
- 6 Herman Kulke, "Some Remarks about the Jagannatha Trinity", *Indologent-Tagung*, 1971, Wiesbaden, 1973, p. 130.
- 7 Prabhat Mukerjee, "The Garhpada Grant to Potesvara Bhatta by Purusottama Gajapati", *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, Vol. II, No. 3/4, 1953–54, p. 39.
- 8 G.N. Dash, "The Evolution of the Priestly Power: The Suryavamsa Period", *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, eds. A. Eschmann, H. Kulke, G.C. Tripathi, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 216–17.
- 9 Prabhat Mukherjee, *History of Medieval Vaishnavism in Orissa*, Calcutta, 1940, p. 77.
- 10 Rajendralala Mitra, *The Antiquities of Orissa*, 2 vols., Calcutta, 1963 reprint of 1880 edition, II, p. 257.
- 11 Dines Chandra Sircar, *The Sakta Pithas*, Delhi, 1973, 2nd edition, p. 35.
- 12 Dines Chandra Sircar, "Two Inscriptions from Jajpur", *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4, 1949, pp. 184–85.
- 13 Andrew Stirling, "An Account, Geographical, Statistical and Historical of Orissa Proper or Cuttack", *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. XV, 1825, p. 335.
- 14 Ramaprasad Chanda, "Exploration in Orissa", *Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 44, 1930, p. 2.
- 15 Including the *Aparajitapriccha* (222.28), the

Rupamandana (5.8), and the Buddhist *Pujapaddhati* (Virachamunda section, 31–39). The *naga* and *linga* frequently associated with her in textual accounts may be represented by images of Shiva Gajasuravadha-murti and a *naga* which are included within the sanctum following the images of the *ashtamatrika*.

- 16 See Thomas Donaldson, "The Sava-Vahana as Purusa in Orissan Images from Camunda to Kali", *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 51, No. 1/2, 1991, pp. 107–41.
- 17 See Thomas Donaldson, "Orissan Images of Varahi, Oddiyana Marici, and Related Sow-faced Goddesses", *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 55, No. 1/2, 1995, pp. 155–81.
- 18 One of the *yogini* images is missing.



Conserving the Temple of Lord Jagannath

Gopal C. Chauley

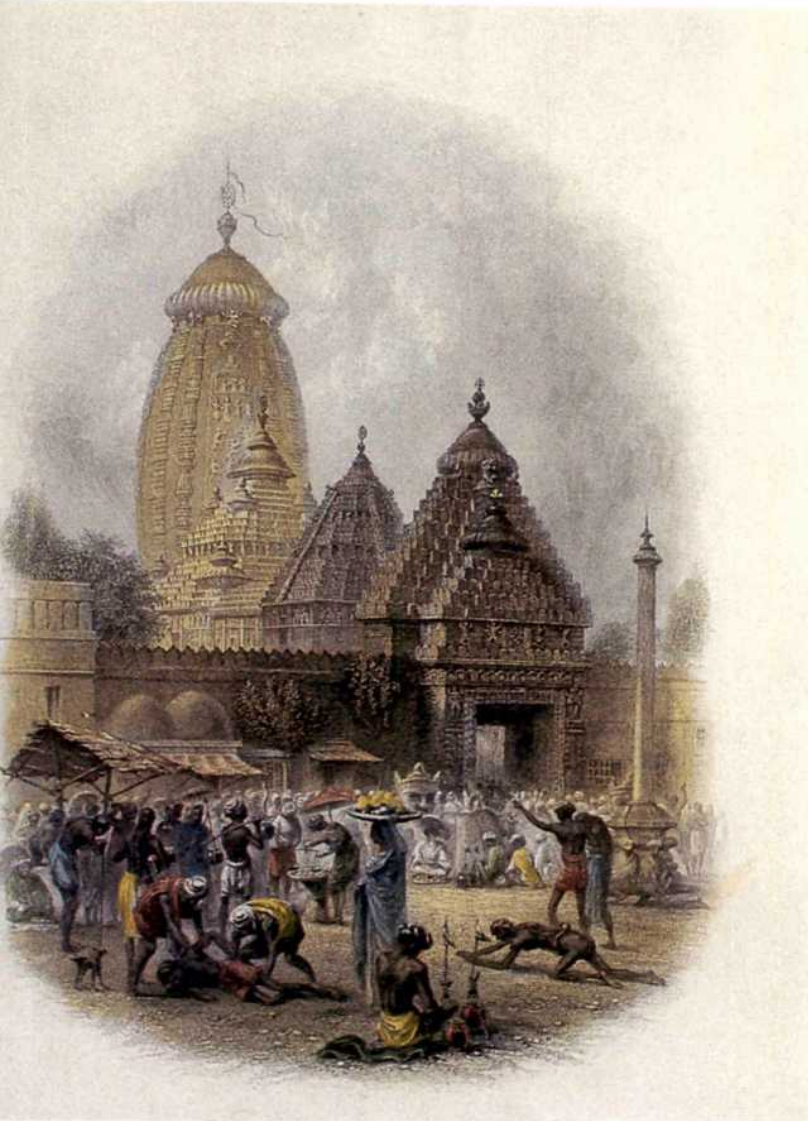
The purpose of this essay is to provide a brief account of the recent efforts at conservation by the Archaeological Survey of India of the great temple of Jagannath at Puri, one of the holiest of Hindu temples on the subcontinent. Not only did the process help to clean and conserve the monument, it also revealed various interesting architectural and sculptural elements of the structure that were lost due to repeated coats of lime plaster applied over centuries. The work has also solved other mysteries associated with the structure and yielded inscriptions that provide interesting information about its past history. The restorations therefore now require a re-evaluation of this magnificent example of Orissan architectural genius and passionate devotion to Jagannath, Lord of the Universe.

The earliest Ganga monument in Orissa, dating from the 11th century, the temple stands on a high platform and is approachable from ground level by a flight of 22 steps (*baisi poucha*). The edifice is massive and strong, the product of ancient Orissa's master architects' experience in the art of temple building (figures 1 and 2).

The temple of Jagannath is not only the largest but also the tallest surviving temple in Orissa, rising to a height of over 63 m. The temple has the usual *garbhagriha* (inner sanctum), *jagamohana* (hall of congregation), *natamandapa* (hall of dance), and

bhogamandapa (hall of offerings), the outer walls of which are decorated with exquisitely carved figures of divine and semi-divine beings and other artistic motifs. Around the main temple on the north, south, and west subsidiary shrines were added to house the associated deities or the *parshvadevatas* – Trivikrama on the north, Varaha on the south, and Narasimha on the west, in front of the three central projections. On the door jambs of these three shrines are depicted the 24 (*chaturvimsati*) forms of Vishnu as identified by this author,¹ a rare iconographic feat not seen in other temples dedicated to Vishnu.

The Jagannath temple was constructed by King Chodagangadeva in the first quarter of the 12th century on the remains of an earlier temple. It is dedicated to Lord Purushottama and stands on an eight-metre elevated mound. To protect it from invasions by the sultans of Bengal who had earlier attempted to loot the jewellery of Lord Jagannath, it was provided with two massive *prakaras* (compound walls) capped with battlements, and it looks like a fort. There are four gateways in the four cardinal directions, each an architectural marvel with a pyramidal terraced roof embellished with figures from the Hindu pantheon, dancers, drummers, etc. As is customary, the eastern gateway is known as *simhadwara* (lion-gate), the western one *vyaghradwara* (tiger-gate), northern

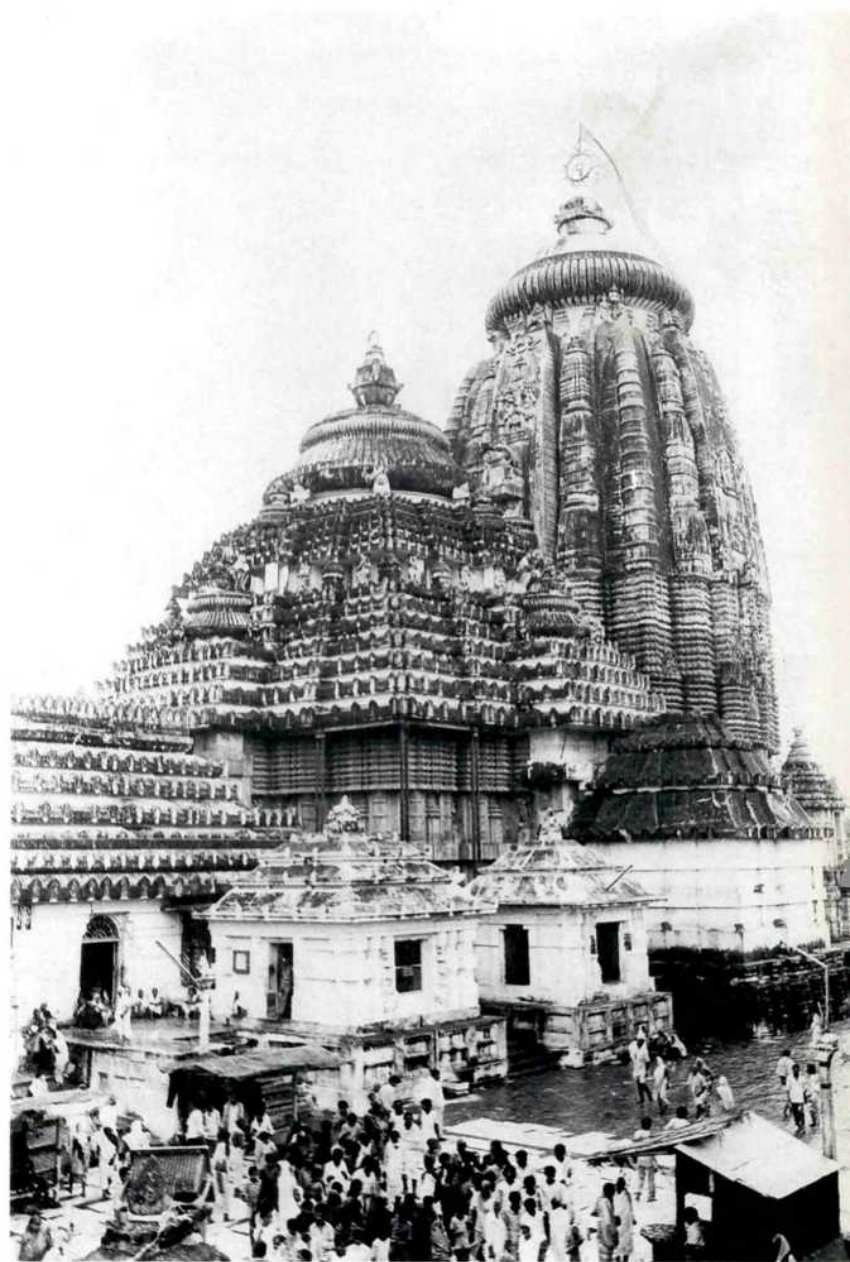


1

"Temple of Juggernaut", a 19th-century print from the title page of *A History of India and of the British Empire in the East*, Volume I. Courtesy Phillips Antiques, Mumbai.

2

A recent view of the Jagannath temple, Puri.
Photograph: ASI.





hastidwara (elephant-gate), and the southern *ashvadwara* (horse-gate).

The outer wall measures 202.70 x 196.30 m, and the inner one 121.90 x 84.75 m. The important places of interest within the outer wall are the gardens – *kohili vaikuntha upavana* and *nila-chala upavana*, the *ananda bazar* (place of distribution of *bhoga* and *mahaprasada*), the *snana mandapa* (bathing platform), and the *bhogashala* (grand kitchen). Within the inner wall, besides the main temple, a number of shrines of medium and smaller size were constructed in later periods, and at present there are 95 of them.

Although Orissa has innumerable temples, it was the temple of Jagannath that became the cultural epicentre. Primarily a Hindu temple, it is also revered by Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains. The management of the temple is a very complex process with numerous and varied rituals (Misra 1984).

Jagannath is better known to the outside world through the famous car festival or Ratha Yatra (figure 3). It is the most colourful among the festivals of the Lord, held during the bright fortnight of Ashadha (June–July). Each year, special wooden chariots are built for Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra. Construction of these chariots commences in April–May in front of the palace of the Raja of Puri. The chariot of Jagannath is called Nandighosha (13.5 m high with sixteen wheels), that of Sri Balabhadra is Taladhvaja (13.2 m high with fourteen wheels), and that of Subhadra is Devadalana or Darpadalana (12.9 m high with twelve wheels). The Gajapati Maharaja of Puri ceremonially sweeps the chariots in the presence of lakhs of pilgrims. The chariots move in procession from the main temple to the temple of Sri Gundicha.

THE NEED FOR CONSERVATION

Unlike other temples in Orissa, which are richly carved, the outer walls of the Jagannath temple and all the subsidiary shrines in the complex were covered with a thick coat of lime plaster. A reason quoted by many scholars is that the annual whitewashing or

lime-plastering made the temple more attractive during the Ratha Yatra. Others believed that it was done to save it from the onslaught of iconoclasts. But in reality there was another motive for this practice which began around the 16th century: to save it from deterioration. The Jagannath temple is built of ashlar stone and blocks of khondalite in courses without using mortar; instead wrought iron clamps have been used in profuse quantities to keep the blocks in position. The maximum damage to the temple therefore was caused by the rusting of these clamps. Apart from this the stone expanded due to seepage, generating pressure and causing chunks to fall.

Since the temple is visited by thousands of devotees every day, to avoid further damage and to prevent stones falling from the outer walls, the king might have decided to cover the outer faces of the *shikhara* and the damaged portions with lime plaster, restoring the temple's original outline. In due course, plaster was also added on the outer walls of all the subsidiary shrines, important among these being the Narasimha, Lakshmi, Vimala, Surya, Nilamadhava, Ganesha, Saraswati, and Khira-Chara Gopinath shrines.

Before Independence, the management of the temple vested with the king of Puri but since then it has been entrusted to a committee (appointed by the Government of Orissa under the Lord Jagannath Temple Act – 1954) which is responsible for its maintenance and repairs.

In 1972, with mounting problems of structural weakness and profuse leakage, the state government referred the matter to the Central government. The Archaeological Survey of India examined the building for structural and associated problems and submitted its report to the government.

In 1973, an expert committee on the conservation and preservation of the Jagannath temple was constituted with M.N. Deshpande, then Director General of the ASI, as chairperson. At the first meeting, members did a test check by removing the outer plaster in a few places. It was found that

3

View of Ratha Yatra procession, Puri.
Photograph:
Eberhard Fischer.

beautiful carvings existed below the thick coat of lime plaster. Experts unanimously agreed that the thick coat of plaster (45 cm) had failed to control leakage; besides, it was putting immense pressure on the fabric of the temple, therefore its removal was necessary.

The deplastering of the surface of the Jagannath temple has brought to light an array of sculptures and other decorative details, minute designs and figurines carved and cut in stone with such consummate skill that they create an illusion of wood or ivory carving.

THE ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

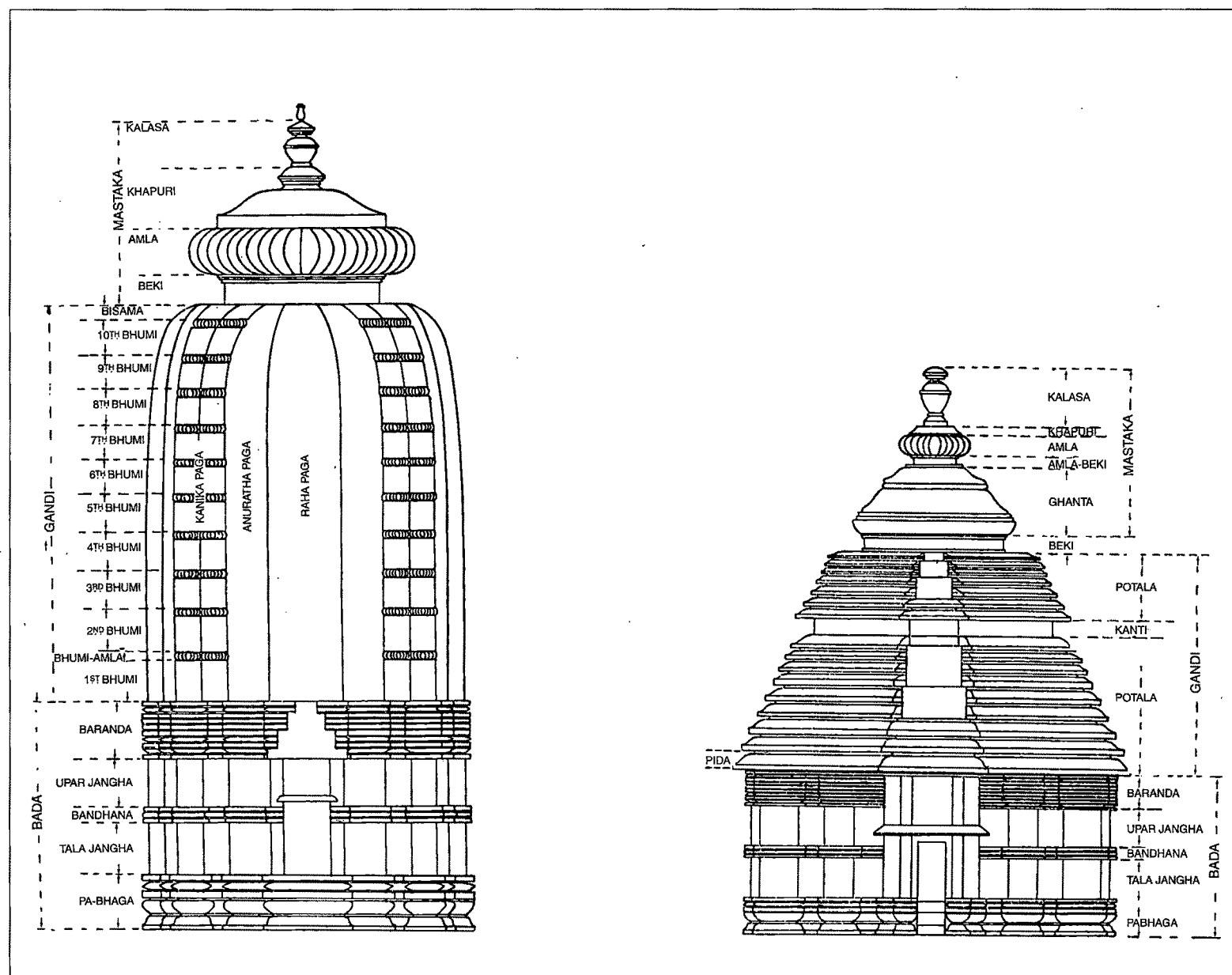
In general the architectural features of the Jagannath temple bear close resemblance to those of the Lingaraja temple in Bhubaneswar. The main shrine is constructed on a high

platform, the lowermost portion of which is decorated with friezes of elephants, horses, camels, and processions of warriors. The upper part is decorated with scroll, floral, and geometric designs as well as processions of horses and elephants.

Orissan temple architecture uses the metaphor of human anatomy in its terminology (figure 4): *pa-bhaga* (foot), *jangha* (leg), *baranda* (waist), *gandi* (body), *beki* (neck), and *amla-khapuri* (head). Each vertical plane of the *shikhara* has the following pilasters: *raha paga* (at the centre), *anuraha* or *anuratha paga* (on either side of the centre), and *kanika paga* (at the corners). These are also known as *ratha* projections. At its apex is a huge copper *nila chakra* (figure 5).

The *raha paga* has a large chaitya window motif carved into it. On either side of the motif

4
Drawings showing the principal segments of a *rekha deul* and *pidha deul*. After Orissa: *Kunst und Kultur in Nordost-Indien*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 1980.





5

Close-up view of *shikhara* of the Jagannath temple with thick plaster.
Photograph: ASI.

are two lifesize demonic figures holding conches. Inside the motif beaded borders are carved. On the lower *jangha*, miniature temple designs known as *khakhara mundi*, project from the vertical planes. Between the temple replicas are colossal figures of mythical animals such as the *gaja-simha*, *gaja-shardula*, and *gaja-vyala*, a lion trampling an elephant or a demon. Similarly the surface of the upper *jangha* has miniature *pidha mundis*

or *pidha deuls* above the *khakhara mundis* of the lower *jangha*. The corner spaces between two *pidha mundis* are embellished with lifesize sculptures of *madanikas* or *sura sundaris*, beautiful maidens, in different poses, sensuously modelled, exhibiting the superior workmanship of the Ganga period (figure 6).

The deplastering has brought to light artistic *anga shikharas* on the vertical surface of the *anuraha paga* (figures 7 and 8). Each

anuraha paga holds three such replicas of *rekha deuls* placed one above the other. Altogether 24 such *anga shikharas* exist all around the temple in the same order as on the outer walls of the Lingaraja temple.

The most attractive architectural member is the *amalaka* resting on the *beki*, a huge carved circular piece made out of several dressed stone blocks with curved fluting making it look like an *amalaka* fruit, a unique indigenous innovation of Orissan architects (figures 9 and 10). Since it projects more than a metre around the *beki*, supports are provided below it in the form of massive figures of lions placed at the four corners, and four colossal figures of Garuda as load-bearing devices. Thus Orissan temple architecture carved a separate niche for itself in Indian temple architecture and came to be known as the Kalinga style.

The carvings of gods and goddesses discovered on the outer walls of the Jagannath

temple are of great iconographic interest. It would not be an exaggeration to term the temple a museum of art and architecture. Stories from the life of Krishna are also carved along the lower walls. The sculptures are not confined to Vaishnavism but are pan-Hindu with images of Shiva, Ganesha, Surya, Shakti (Vimala), and Brahma within the niches of the *anga shikharas*, and in the independent temples dedicated to these deities.

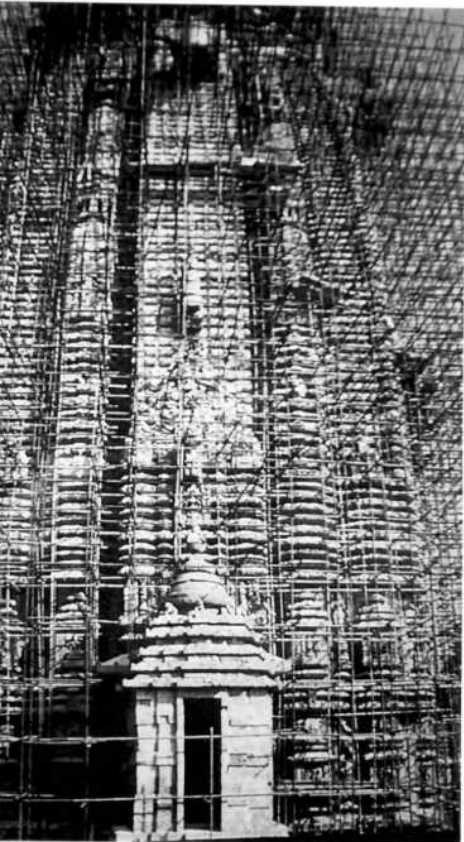
On the lower *jangha* within the *khakhara mundi* shrines are images of *dikpalas* or guardians – Indra on his elephant, Yama on a buffalo, Isana on a bull, Agni on a ram, Varuna on a *makara*, etc. In the upper *jangha's* *pidha-mundi* shrines, the ten incarnations of Vishnu are represented.

A significant discovery has been the 24 forms of Vishnu carved on either side of the pilasters of the *parshvadevata* shrines (see note 1). So far, nowhere in India have all the

6

Close-up view of original carvings found after deplastering of the *jangha* portion, Jagannath temple. Photograph: ASI.

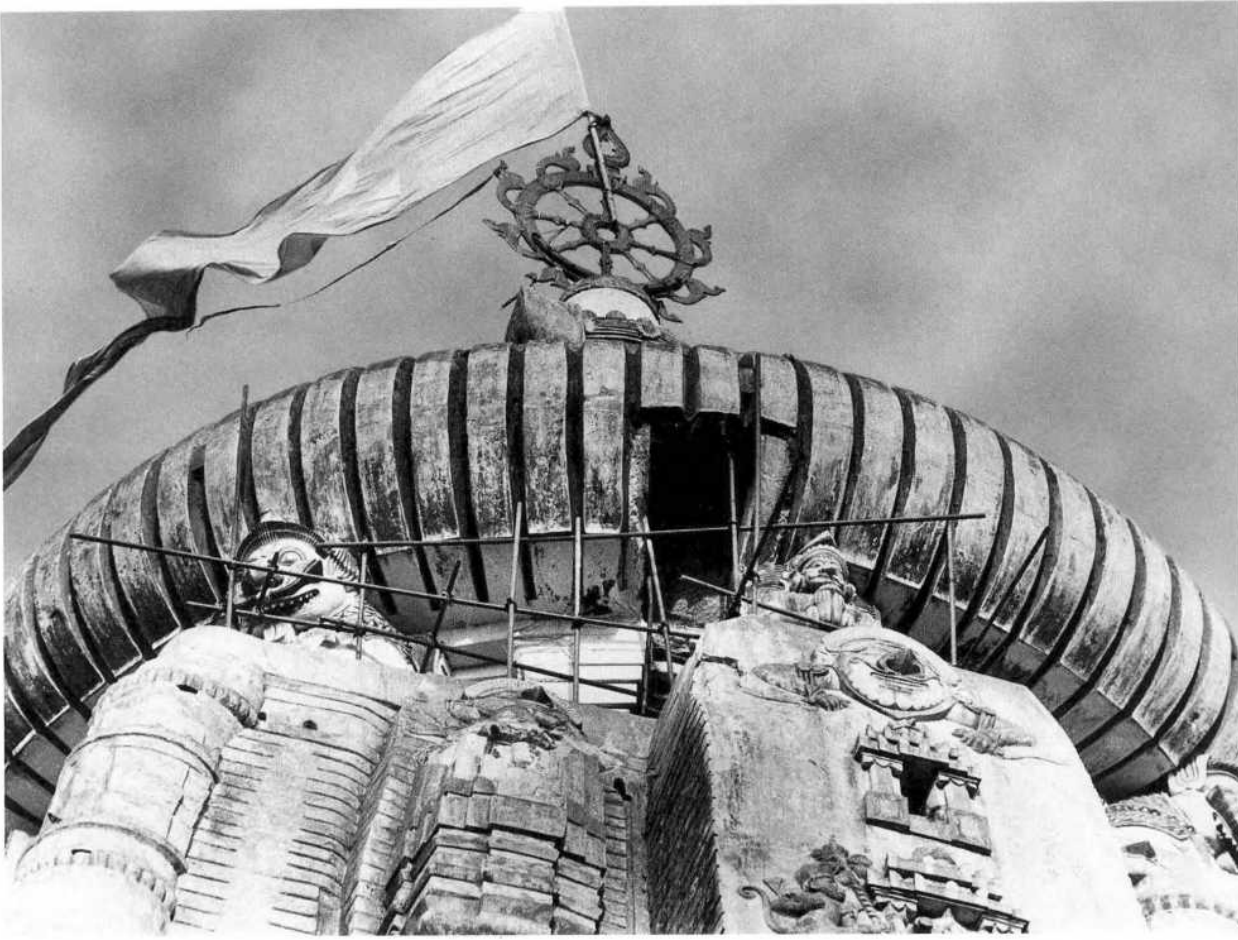




7
Close-up view of *shikhara* of the Jagannath temple during restoration. Photograph: ASI.



8
View of *shikhara* after deplastering and conservation. Photograph: ASI.



9
View of *amalaka* of the
Jagannath temple.
before restoration.
Photograph: ASI.



10
View of *amalaka*
after restoration.
Photograph: ASI.

24 forms been depicted within any known temples. They are represented standing on lotuses, each with four arms and adorned with *vanamala* and *kirita mukuta*, and the other usual ornaments, but are differentiated by the alteration of the four chief attributes – *shankha* (conch), *chakra* (wheel), *gada* (mace), *padma* (lotus) – which they hold.

Side by side with the deplastering and conservation of the Jagannath temple, similar operations were undertaken in the Narasimha, Ganesha, Surya, and Vimala temples in the complex, and completed up to the *shikhara* level. In the process, on the outer walls of each temple exquisitely carved images have come to light (figures 11 and 12).

Mention may be made of a series of donatory and votive inscriptions discovered on the outer walls of the Narasimha temple, hitherto concealed beneath the plaster. They are in Sanskrit, Gaudiya (a Bengali script of the 12th–14th century), Telugu, and Oriya. Most of them are records of gifts to Purushottama, Narasimha, Balabhadra, and Subhadra. The most important point to be noted is that nowhere is the name of Jagannath mentioned; he is referred to as Purushottama. The inscriptions belong to the first half of the 12th century.

DEPLASTERING AND PRESERVATION

The conservation measures adopted included the resetting of bulging masonry, replacement of damaged and missing architectural members, grouting of voids in the masonry, and repairing and strengthening the damaged *beki* and *amalaka*.

A calamitous event took place on June 14, 1990 while conservation was in progress. A piece of the stone *amalaka* weighing about six tonnes fell from the western side of the *shikhara* (figure 9). On close examination it was found that the *amalaka* comprises several members bound to one another by iron clamps or dowels fixed in grooves in the stone surface. Plastering over these iron clamps had led to their deterioration, and finally to the fall of the stone block. With great difficulty the

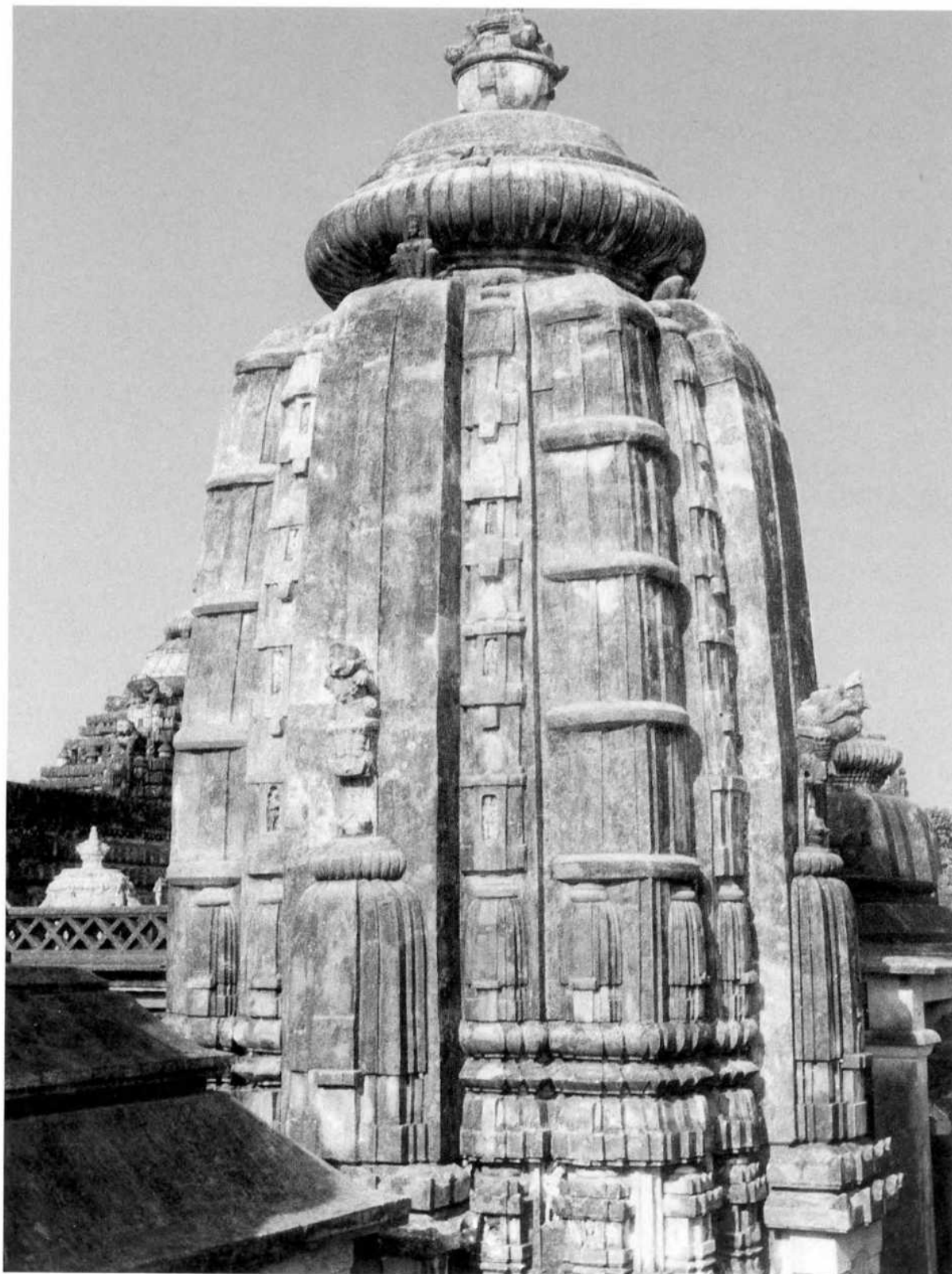
amalaka was restored and the problem rectified.

The investigation carried out inside the *shikhara* of the Jagannath temple in 1991 brought to light the existence of two more floors inside the *garbhagriha* (figure 13). The ground floor and first floor are connected by a flight of steps, but no passage is provided to connect the second floor with the first. Wide vents (45 x 50 cm) are provided on the four sides below the *beki* and the second floor is approachable only through these. Each floor rests on corbelled arches.

It was found that the condition of the inner walls and corbells required attention. Similarly, on the southern side of the temple major structural weakness was detected in the form of multiple cracks, missing architectural pieces, etc. Another unfortunate happening took place on August 13, 1992: two pieces of corbelled stone in the southwest corner of the *garbhagriha* collapsed, inciting fresh panic about the safety and preservation of the temple.

Experts from different parts of the country were invited to Puri to examine the structural and connected problems. The Central and Orissa governments helped in the formation of a Coordination Committee with the Secretary, Works, Government of Orissa; Collector, Puri; and Director (Science) from the ASI as members, to determine the future course of action to be followed in tackling the problems. Experts from the State Engineering Research Centre (Ghaziabad), Central Engineering Research Institute (Roorkee), Indian Institute of Technology (Kharagpur), Regional Research Laboratory (Bhubaneswar), and others were also invited, and the following recommendations were made:

- (a) The missing corbells were to be replaced by newly carved replicas and alternately grouted by drilling holes, etc.
- (b) The core of the inner wall was to be consolidated by drilling holes and grouting with PMC (polymer modified cement) liquid mortar.
- (c) Corbells were to be anchored with stainless steel rods by drilling 1.5 to 2 m holes and sealing with epoxy mortar.



11
View of Narasimha temple
with plaster. Photograph:
ASI.

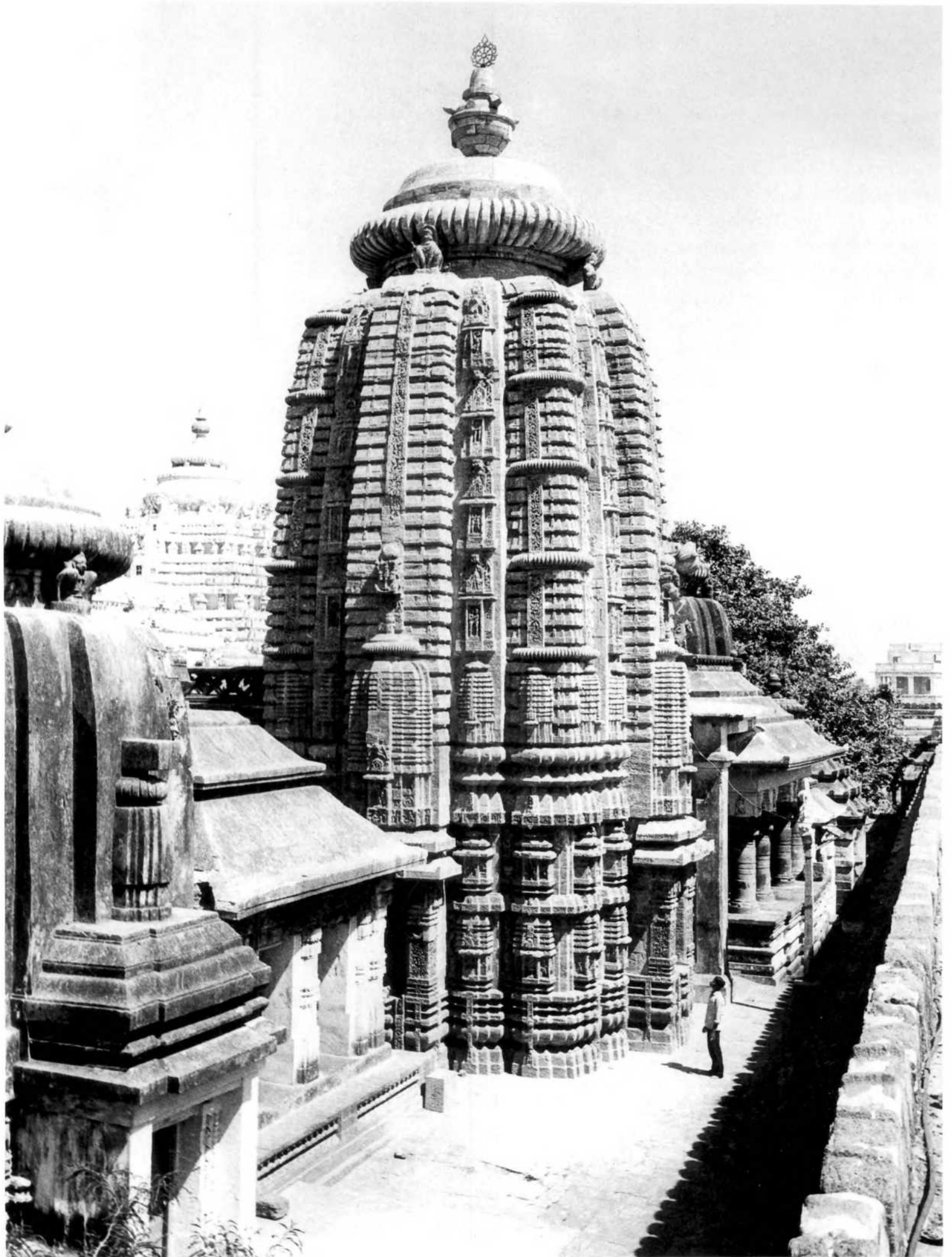
(d) The side walls inside the *garbhagriha* were to be reinforced by stainless steel flats 12 mm thick. Since checking of the *garbhagriha* could only take place during the annual Ratha Yatra, it was decided to provide a second line of protection by erecting a stainless steel truss to support the corbelled ceiling. The design was supplied by Professor A.P. Gupta of IIT, Kharagpur. The fabrication work was entrusted to the Orissa Small Scale Industries Corporation (figure 14).

(e) At two points in the ceiling of the first floor, 10 cm diameter holes were to be made for ventilation between the first and second floors.

(f) Tubular scaffolding to provide the temporary support to ceilings of the two upper floors was also recommended as a precautionary measure.

To undertake the above work, the removal of deities from the *ratnavedi* (*ratnasimhasan*, jewelled throne) was essential. With the kind

12
View of Narasimha temple
after deplastering.
Photograph: ASI.



support of Gajapati Maharaja of Puri, the deities were placed inside the *jagamohana* on November 29, 1992.

To complete the work, a task force was formed to assist and guide the existing staff. The inner wall of the *garbhagriha* was strengthened by replacing damaged stone blocks as well as corbells. In the second storey, broken corbell stones were found lying on the floor. Close examination revealed that 26 corbells had got detached and fallen. To prevent damage to the floor by further fall, a cushion of paddy was provisionally provided within the 9 x 9 m space. The broken stone blocks were removed and the surrounding walls consolidated by grouting the core of the stone masonry with polymer and cement liquid.

After completion of work in the inner *garbhagriha*, work on the *shikhara* of the temple in each of its successive three floors, and the remaining deplastering and consolidation work on the outer walls was taken up and completed successfully. The southeast corner of the tall *shikhara* was found in a badly damaged state with the veneering stone crumbling. One by one each of the damaged stone blocks over the vertical planes of the southeast corner were removed and new stone blocks dressed and fixed onto the *shikhara* with epoxy mortar and stainless steel pins. The huge *anga shikhara* on the eastern *raha paga* below the colossal *gaja-shardula* figure was found to be in a highly dilapidated condition, and this was systematically dismantled and reset exactly following the original.

We were in search of the cause of such damage to the *shikhara* on the south and southeast sides, but no reasonable clues came to light until December 2, 1995. On the eastern side, over the topmost architectural members of the *raha paga*, an Oriya inscription engraved on the stone surface was discovered, which read:

San 1335
Śrī Śrī Rāma Chandra Deva
tritiya arika
Dinabandhu Mohanti Era

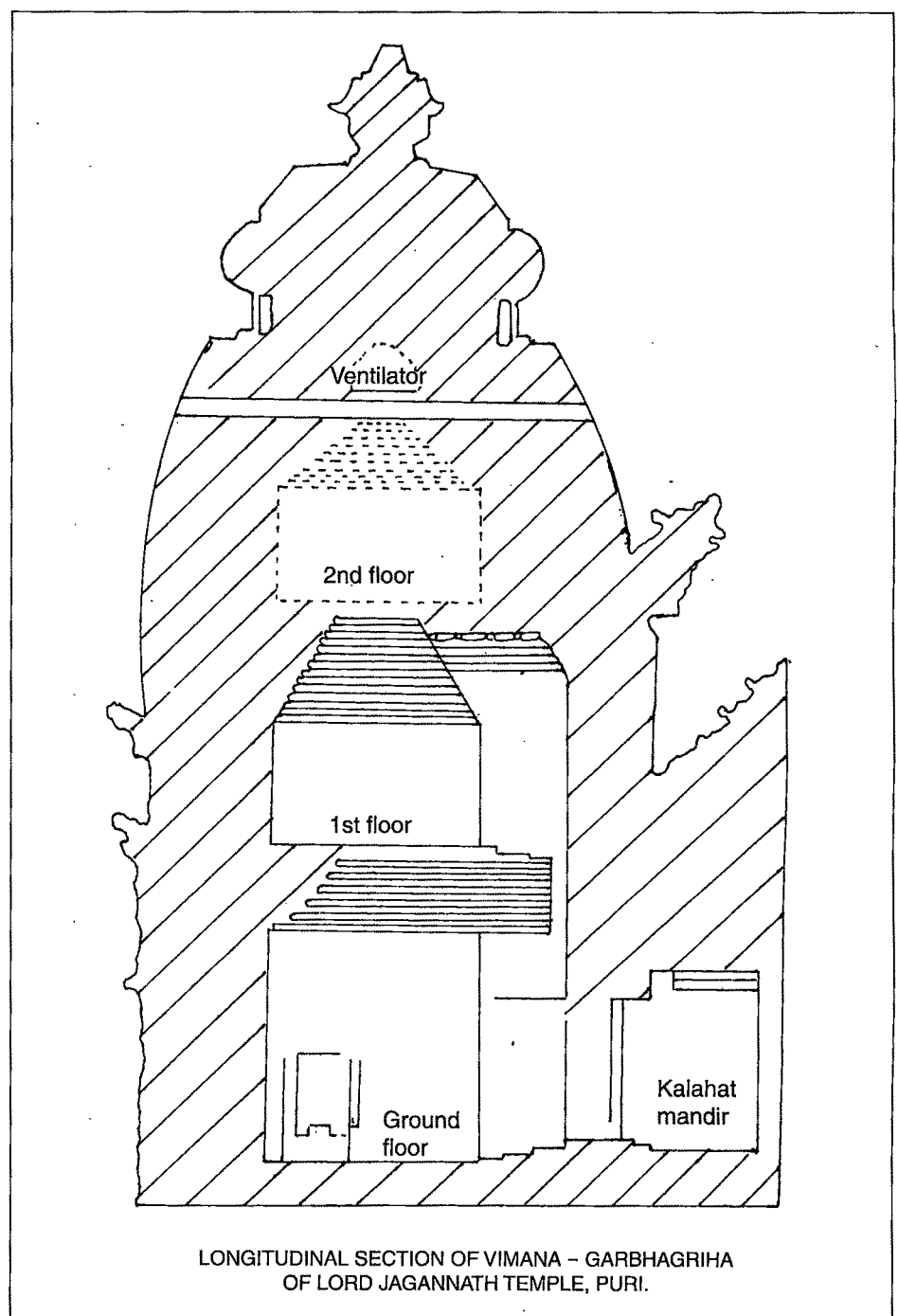
prakaraniya vajra
parithibaru attadwara meramati
Aparti Mohapatra

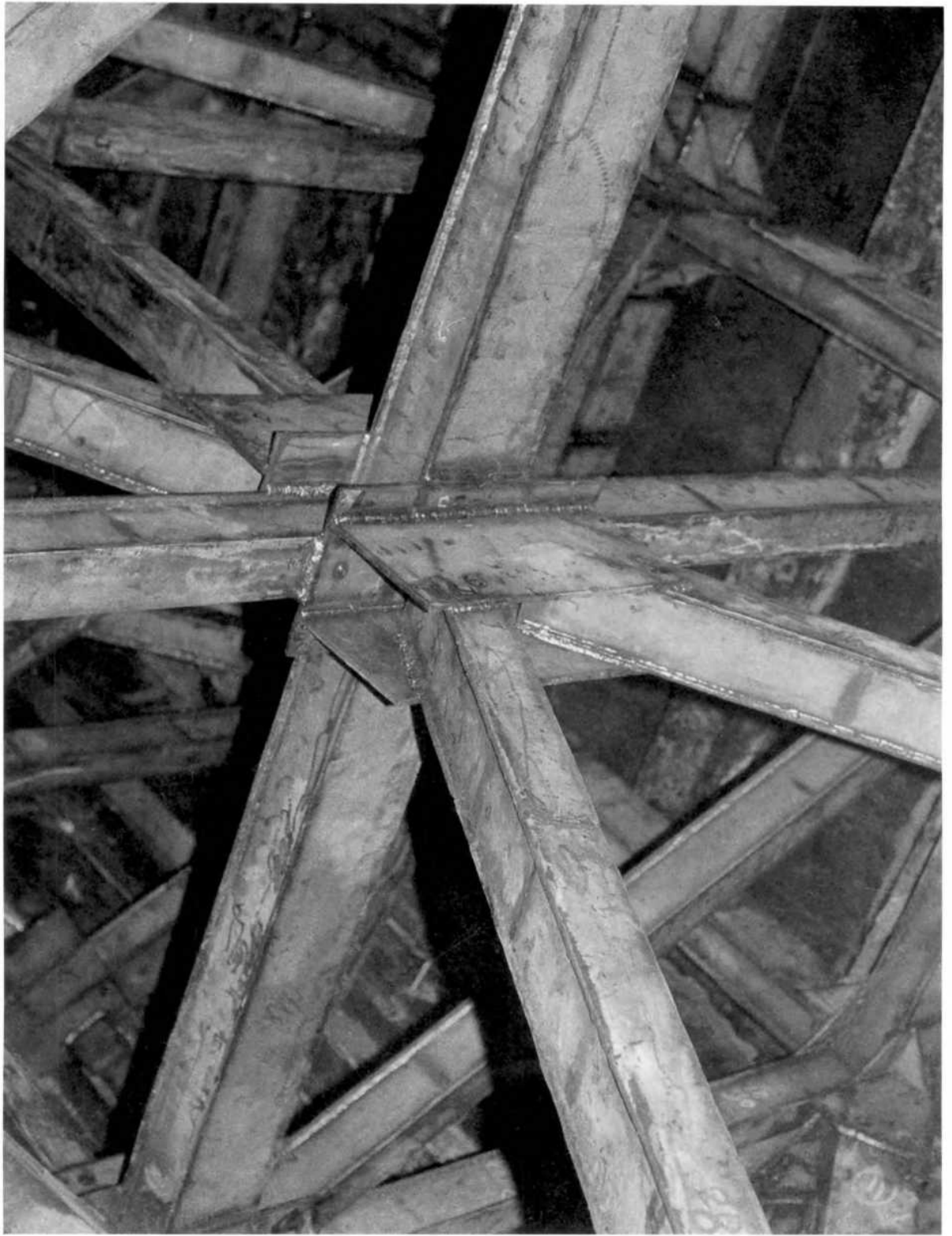
1928 mashiha

Artha Bhatta Madhava

The translation is as follows: In Bengali Samvat 1335 (1928), during the 3rd regnal year of Gajapati Shri Rama Chandra Deva, king of Puri, one Dinabandhu Mohanti (*sthapati* or architect) undertook repair work on the Jagannath temple, which had sustained severe damage due to a thunderbolt or *vajra*. The co-*sthapati* was Apariti Mohapatra. The scribe was Artha Bhatta Madhava. At the bottom of the inscription the year 1928 is also

13
 Drawing showing three successive floors inside the Jagannath temple.
 Courtesy ASI.





14

View of stainless steel truss provided inside the *garbhagriha*, Jagannath temple. Photograph: ASI.

engraved. (In another copper clip affixed on the *khapuri* the name of *Aparti Moharana* with the date 2.7.28 and *Kartik Mistiri, ghara, Pathuria Sahi* appeared.) This discovery provides the clue to the extensive damage on the southeast and southern sides of the temple.

After completion of the temple deplastering up to the *beki* level, deplastering of the *amalaka* was taken up. This went smoothly on the northern, western, and northeastern sides of the *amalaka* and no major damage was

detected. When work on the southeast and southern sides was in progress, the ASI team was concerned by the discovery that the six lower leaves of the *amalaka* which had collapsed in the past had been repaired using smaller stone blocks instead of carving from a single block. The matter was reviewed at the Technical Expert Committee Meeting and it was unanimously decided that the missing pieces be replaced by newly dressed large stone blocks. This not only increased the workload but also created problems of

quarrying such huge blocks measuring at least 1 x 1 x 2 m. The *amalaka* of the Jagannath temple is massive and protrudes 90 to 100 cm from the *beki*. In the past, the fall of lower leaves was prevented by masonry supports.

The Technical Expert Committee recommended that each *amalaka* leaf (weighing six to seven tonnes) should be sawn into two pieces, which would be easier to handle and lift over 60 metres. The finished *amalaka* stone pieces were thus lifted and put in place. Before insertion, epoxy mortar was applied on all sides of the dressed stone and the sides of the corresponding *amalaka* leaves, and a key system introduced to fix each into the corestone. Other damaged *amalaka* pieces noticed during repair work were also reinforced by inserting stainless steel rods of 1.5 to 2 m length, and finally strengthened with epoxy mortar.

The initial decision of the Technical Expert Committee was to provide corbell pillars similar to those provided by the ASI in 1991 on the western side after the collapse of one lower leaf in June 1990. But the idea was modified since it was felt that a large number of such pillars around the *beki* would put pressure on the structure which might prove fatal. So it was decided to introduce stainless steel pillars or portals. Sixteen square pillars (25 x 25 cm) were installed around the *beki*, each again supported by horizontal connecting bars. Below the *amalaka* at a distance of 70 cm from the *beki* an almost circular prop was also provided on which the *amalaka* gently rests. This work was completed by July 1996 in time for the Nabakalebara ritual of installing new idols in the temple, which takes place approximately every twelve years.

All conservation work was monitored by Technical Expert Committee members. Structural conservation was followed by chemical treatment and preservation of the portions attended to. This was done in four stages: (1) chemical cleaning to remove hardened lime accretions which remained within the grooves and ornamental portions, (2) desalination of chemically cleaned portions, (3) fungicidal treatment of cleaned

areas, and (4) application of preservatives that would reduce absorbance of water and other harmful substances, and would have a life of at least ten years.

NOTE

1 Keshava, Narayana, Madhava, Govinda, Vishnu, Madhusudana, Trivikrama, Vamana, Sridhara, Hrishiksha, Padmanabha, Damodara, Samkarshana, Vasudeva, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Adhokshaja, Purushottama, Narasimha, Achyuta, Upendra, Janardana, Hari, Krishna.

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My thanks are due to the late Shri Biju Patnaik and to Shri J.B. Patnaik, former Chief Ministers of Orissa, for their confidence and wholehearted cooperation and guidance during the conservation process.

I am thankful to His Highness Gajapati Maharaja of Puri for the blessings, guidance, and cooperation extended in the completion of this sacred task.



Closer to Heaven than the Gods: Jain Monks in the Art of Pre-Kushan Mathura

Sonya Rhie Quintanilla

The ancient city of Mathura in northern India, well-known for its stone sculptures of the Kushan and Gupta periods, was also a major centre of art production before the arrival of the Kushans.¹ A large proportion of the pre-Kushan sculptural finds, dating from the mid-2nd century BCE through 1st century CE, comprise elaborately carved architectural elements and diverse objects for worship that once belonged to flourishing Jain monasteries and sanctuaries at Mathura. The art of these Jain establishments includes important iconic imagery and narrative scenes, many of which were innovative and would prove to be influential in the development of early Indian sculpture. A prolonged study of the pre-Kushan sculptures recovered from Mathura – most of which are fragmentary and scattered among collections throughout the world – led me to find six representations of a particular sect of Jain monks, which constitute the focus of this paper (figures 1–6).

The monks of this Jain sect are shown to have been completely nude, except for the distinctive broad strip of pleated cloth, called a *chola*, draped over the left forearm; because of this feature, they are called Ardhaphalaka, or “partially clothed”, in later texts.² As yet there is no evidence for their presence in any other region of India,³ and they seem to have been the dominant, if not sole, Jain sect in Mathura before the Kushan

period. Could this Ardhaphalaka sect have been largely responsible for the elaborate pre-Kushan Jain works of art and architecture at Mathura, unparalleled by those of early Jain sites in other regions, and rivalling those from establishments of the other religious groups at Mathura? If so, then an understanding of the characteristics of this sect at Mathura could assist in our perception of how and why Mathura was culturally distinctive and productive of the momentous accomplishments for which it is so famous.

Some scholars have noted the existence of Ardhaphalaka monks in the art of Mathura during the Kushan period; however, only passing allusions have been made to several of their pre-Kushan depictions that will be presented here.⁴ Furthermore, no study has discussed the consistent differences between the pre-Kushan depictions and those of the subsequent Kushan period (2nd and 3rd centuries CE). The advent of the Kushan period under the emperor Kanishka at Mathura (around the turn of the 2nd century CE) approximately coincides with the systematic formation of the two main Jain orders, namely the Shvetambaras and the Digambaras. The former validated the wearing of white monastic robes, while the latter contended that true ascetics must be completely nude in order to attain liberation. After the schism, the Ardhaphalaka sect

apparently began to assimilate into the Shvetambara order. By the end of the 3rd century CE, they evidently became completely subsumed within it, and no other depiction of an Ardhapthalaka monk is to be found thereafter. With the gradual integration of the Ardhapthalakas within the larger Shvetambara monastic community, representations of Ardhapthalaka monks change during the Kushan period. They are sometimes depicted together with fully-clothed Shvetambara monks and nuns, and they consistently hold their *cholapatta* in front of their bodies so as to conceal their nudity – none of which circumstances obtained in the pre-Kushan depictions of Ardhapthalaka monks. Moreover, the inscriptions accompanying representations of Ardhapthalaka monks in the art of the Kushan period indicate that their monastic community was divided into groups, subgroups, and smaller branches, the names of which accord with those found in the early Shvetambara canons of around the 3rd century CE. None of these names is found in the relatively numerous pre-Kushan Jain inscriptions. Thus, the Kushan sculptures and inscriptions may offer a hybrid of Ardhapthalaka and Shvetambara ideals. In light of such changes that occurred during the Kushan period, I shall focus this discussion only on the pre-Kushan (i.e. pre-schismatic) representations of Ardhapthalaka monks in order to attempt to identify some salient characteristics of this intriguing sect prior to its integration into a more mainstream, canonical form of Jainism.

In the absence of Jain texts either securely datable to a time prior to around the 2nd or 3rd century CE or specifically attributable to the Ardhapthalakas, we must look to sculptural and epigraphical records to gain some understanding of them during the pre-Kushan period when they were a distinctive, dominant, and active group at Mathura. Several features of the Ardhapthalaka monks can be discerned from inscriptions carved on reliefs that also depict monks of this sect, such as the inscribed bas relief sculpture in figure 2. In this pre-Kushan inscription, datable to the 1st

century CE, the Ardhapthalaka monks were simply called *nigatha* (Sanskrit: *nirgrantha*, “free from bonds”). This is the name commonly used to refer to Jain monks in general, and thus there is no indication that the Ardhapthalakas singled themselves out in contradistinction to other groups of Jains in terms of nomenclature. They occupied extensive sanctuaries at Mathura which included stupas, shrines, free-standing pillars, assembly halls, tanks, and icons of the Jinas. Other inscriptions attributable to the pre-Kushan period confirm that the Ardhapthalakas venerated the liberated Jinas, whom they called *arhat*, but only the last Jina, Mahavira (also called Vardhamana), who lived around the 6th century BCE, is referred to by name. Many donative inscriptions on architectural elements and objects of worship reveal that they had a broad base of lay support at Mathura, which, remarkably, was composed in large proportion of women, although there is no evidence for the presence of Jain nuns until the turn of the 2nd century CE. Further information regarding the Ardhapthalaka Jain monks at Mathura can be gleaned from their representations in the works of art presented here (some for the first time), such as their distinguishing visual characteristics and how they were portrayed in relation to other figures. In particular, we shall see that when they are depicted, they usually are shown either in positions close to a liberated Jina or in postures superior to those of celestial beings, such as *kinnara* and *gandharva*.

ARDHAPHALAKA MONKS ON AN ARCHITRAVE IN THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART

A previously unpublished sculpted frieze, currently in the Brooklyn Museum of Art and carved in the spotted red sandstone characteristic of the Mathura region, depicts clear representations of Ardhapthalaka monks (figure 1). Its horizontal dimensions and plain border along the bottom suggest that this sculpted fragment originally formed part of an architrave of a gateway to a sacred precinct, much like the one in figure 2. This bas relief in



1
Fragment of an architrave
with Ardhaphalaka monks.
Mathura, circa early 1st
century CE. Spotted red
sandstone; height 18.4 cm.
Brooklyn Museum of Art
(87.188.5), Gift of Michael
and Georgia de Havenon.
Photograph:
S.R. Quintanilla, courtesy
Brooklyn Museum of Art.

the Brooklyn Museum is datable to around the beginning of the 1st century CE. The crowded composition, relatively deep carving, supple rendition of the vegetation, tranquillity of expressions, and soft, fleshy articulation of the figures, among other features, relate with the style of carvings dated by inscription to the time of Mahakshatrapa Sodasa (r. circa 15 CE).

At the far left of the composition is a tank, filled with huge lotus flowers in varying stages of bloom, and around the stem of each lotus swirl parallel lines that represent water. The walls of the tank are carefully rendered and interrupted on one side by a series of steps that lead down into the water. Next to the tank is a short tree behind which are grouped three male figures; two of them are identifiable as Ardhaphalaka monks. One of the monks is standing, turned slightly towards the tank with his right arm outstretched. He is nude, except for the pleated *cholakapatta* over his left forearm. In his left hand he grasps a *mukhapattika*, the small cloth used by Jain monks to cover their mouths while speaking in order to prevent the accidental inhalation of insects.

The second Ardhaphalaka monk is seated under a tree and on a small square platform, ornamented on its side with vegetal motifs. The distinguishing pleated *cholakapatta* is again shown draped over his left forearm, but in his left hand he holds a small water pot rather than the *mukhapattika* in like manner to brahman ascetics (figure 9). In his right hand he grasps the handle of a whisk broom (*rajoharana*), whose bristles hang over the back of his right shoulder. The whisk broom is used by Jain monks to sweep the paths

before them while they walk to ensure that they do not tread upon any creatures. Their donning of these accoutrements, namely, the *mukhapattika* and the *rajoharana*, confirm that monks of the Ardhaphalaka sect were concerned with non-violence (*ahimsa*), like the members of the Digambara and Shvetambara sects whose tenets are known from later texts. Standing between the two monks in the Brooklyn Museum relief is a layman or a god, dressed in the usual attire of lower garment, shawl-like upper garment, and bracelets. Only the lower two-thirds of the figure survive, but he is turned towards the seated monk with his hands pressed together in the gesture of supplication or homage (*anjali-mudra*). This is a remarkable depiction of a monk of evidently eminent status, as indicated by his position under the tree and on the small platform, being honoured by a devotee. Thus, in the sculptures that adorned their own sanctuaries, the Ardhaphalaka monks portrayed themselves as worthy of veneration.

The right half of the fragmentary architrave depicts a sylvan setting, complete with banana trees and a rocky landscape. Above the cubistic rendition of the rocks remain the lower halves of three human figures who ride upon a fantastic serpentine creature. The pointed tail of the serpentine mount, covered with incised geometric shapes, can be discerned at the far right of the scene, and its curved, snaky body sags under the weight of its three riders. The figure seated in the front of the group, at the left, is another Ardhaphalaka monk. No trace of a garment is visible on his leg, thereby indicating that he is

a nude renunciant. His left forearm is draped with the pleated *cholakapatta*, and in his left hand he clutches his water pot. Directly in back of him are the remains of a male figure, not a monk, whose belt and lower garment are visible as are the bracelets that adorn his wrist. Behind him dangles the leg of a lady, identifiable by her heavy roll anklet, who would have been seated facing backwards. Since they ride a fantastic creature, the male and female figures are possibly celestial beings, but the Ardhapthalaka monk is given pride of place, at the front of the mount. The presence of the lady suggests that this group is distinct from the male trio at the left of the frieze; hence these are two discrete scenes rather than examples of continuous narration.

The subject of this fragmentary bas relief in the Brooklyn Museum of Art has not yet been identified. If it is a narrative scene, the story – like so many unidentified Jain stories depicted in the art of the pre-Kushan periods – apparently is lost to us. However, it is possible that this sculpture does not depict a narrative scene per se. Instead, it may have been part of a series of scenes at a Jain sanctuary inhabited by Ardhapthalaka monks, to which the figures riding on the serpentine creature are coming to pay homage. If so, then the object of worship or cultic centre (such as a stupa or image of a Jina) would have been carved in a section of the architrave that is now missing. The inscription on the stone plaque in figure 2 states that a sanctuary of the Ardhapthalaka monks (*nigatthāna ārahatāyātane*) includes a tank (*prapā*), thus providing approximately contemporaneous evidence for tanks, such as the one carved in figure 1, at Ardhapthalaka Jain precincts in Mathura. Furthermore, a Jain tympanum from Mathura of around the same date depicts processions of fantastic serpentine animals bearing riders who come to venerate an object of worship that was originally depicted in the centre of the composition.⁵

FLYING ABOVE THE GODS

The stone plaque from Mathura datable to the mid to late 1st century CE, inscribed with

the record of major donations made by a courtesan to a Jain sanctuary, depicts a stupa being venerated by two Ardhapthalaka monks, two composite celestial beings, and two dancers (figure 2). Remarkably, the two Ardhapthalaka monks are carved flanking the stupa at the top of the composition, above the celestial beings. The composite celestial beings worship the stupa by throwing flowers at it and offering garlands. The monks, who hover in the air above them in postures of flying, make no offering, instead they touch their right hands to their foreheads in a gesture of homage. The *cholakapatta* is conspicuously draped over their left forearms, while each grasps his water pot in his left hand. They are depicted fully nude, in keeping with the other pre-Kushan renditions of Ardhapthalaka monks; their *cholakapatta* does not function like a loincloth.

An earlier fragment, also from Mathura, probably dating to around the early 1st century BCE, portrays another Ardhapthalaka monk flying above the level of a celestial being, who offers a garland to an object of worship (figure 3). The object of veneration is now missing; only the umbrella that denotes its sanctity remains. The Ardhapthalaka monk, again, is shown above the celestial being; he holds his right hand up in *abhaya-mudra*. His nudity is not shrouded by the *cholakapatta* over his left forearm.

The superior status of the Jain monk is also to be noted on the famous double-sided Jain tympanum from the site of Kankali-Tila at Mathura, now housed in the National Museum, New Delhi. In the detail of the central register of one side of this tympanum (figure 4) are two gods – celestial beings who have the power to fly through the air. They bear offerings of garlands and bunches of lotus flowers to the object of veneration that would have been carved in the centre of the tympanum (now lost). At the far left edge of the detail is the arm and leg of another flying figure – an Ardhapthalaka monk. The deeply pleated *cholakapatta* is visible above his bent leg, and the bristles of the whisk broom held over his shoulder (like that of the seated



2

Stone plaque depicting the veneration of a Jain stupa by Ardhaphalaka monks, celestial beings, and dancers. Mathura, circa mid to late 1st century CE. Spotted red sandstone; 71 x 53 cm. Government Museum, Mathura (Q.2). Photograph: After Ludwig Bachhofer, *Early Indian Sculpture*, New York, 1929, pl. 91.



3

Fragment of a panel with flying Ardhaphalaka monk and kinnara. Mathura, circa early to mid 1st century BCE. Buff sandstone; 56.0 x 58.4 cm. State Museum, Lucknow (J.105). Photograph: S.R. Quintanilla, courtesy State Museum, Lucknow.



4

Detail of a Jain tympanum with flying celestials and fragment of an Ardhaphalaka monk. Mathura, circa early 1st century CE. Spotted red sandstone; height (of entire tympanum) about 1 m. National Museum, New Delhi (J.555). Photograph: S.R. Quintanilla, courtesy National Museum, New Delhi.

figure in the middle of the architrave in figure 1) are discernible at the top of the register. The Ardhaphalaka monk, yet again, is closer to the sacred object than the gods who fly behind him. I would postulate that the central object of veneration to which the Ardhaphalaka monk was originally adjacent was an icon of a Jina. The central object of worship in the lower register of this tympanum in the National Museum is a seated goddess, just as is seen on another example – that of an unbroken Jain tympanum of the Kushan period which has a seated Jina in the centre of its middle register.⁶ By analogy, this earlier tympanum in the National Museum (detail in figure 4) may likewise have originally portrayed a Jina in the centre as well.

These three surviving examples (figures 2–4) that depict Ardhaphalaka monks flying through the air suggest that this sect emphasized powers obtained through high levels of meditative practice. The ability to perform supernatural feats may have been impressive to the laity, for it exhibited the efficacy of their practices and the morality of the monks themselves. Later representations of Ardhaphalaka Jain monks in the Kushan period do not depict them in flight, as far as I am aware; thus, this aspect seems to have

been particularly characteristic of the early Ardhaphalaka sect.

NEXT TO LIBERATION

Ardhaphalaka monks in the art of pre-Kushan Mathura are also depicted in close proximity to images of the Jinās, who are liberated from the cycles of birth and death, and who reside in the true heaven of meditative bliss and absolute freedom (*moksha*). In figure 5, the liberated Jina Parshvanatha, identifiable by the seven-hooded snake canopy seen above his head, is depicted in the central circle of a stone plaque intended for worship (*ayagapata*), datable to around the early 1st century CE. Flanking the enthroned Jina in the privileged central circle usually reserved only for the Jina himself, as seen on other *ayagapata* plaques,⁷ are two Ardhaphalaka monks who honour him with their hands pressed together in *anjali-mudra*. Again they are completely nude except for the *chola-patta*, which is worn over each of their left forearms without shielding their nudity.

Another fragmentary bas relief from Mathura, datable to the late 2nd century BCE, depicts the renunciation of Rishabhanatha, the first of the 24 Jinās of our age, a detail of which is shown in figure 6.⁸ After he

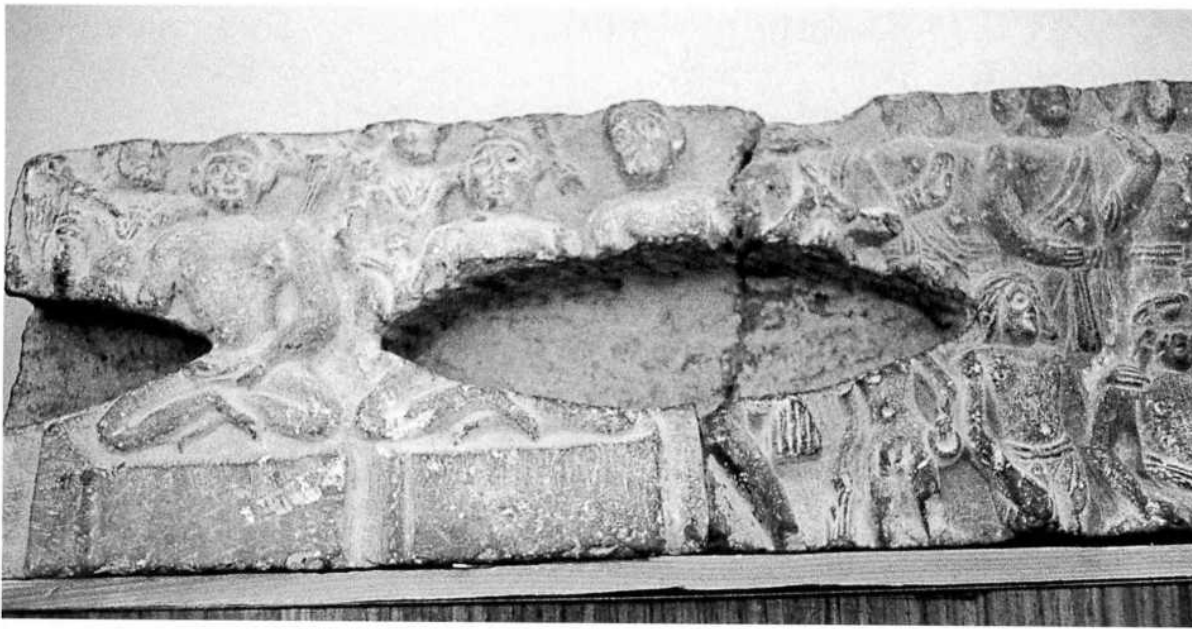
renounced the life of a king, having witnessed the tragic death of the nymph Nilanjana, he became an ascetic and achieved liberation. At the far left of figure 6, Rishabhanatha is portrayed twice, each time seated in meditation on a raised platform, probably depicting two different scenes in the narrative. To the viewer's immediate right of the seated Jinas is a large standing nude figure, who can possibly be identified as an Ardhaphalaka monk, despite the unfortunate obfuscation of his form by the mortise, which was cut through the middle of his body when the stone was reused as a pillar at a later date. The length to which the broad pleated cloth falls by his leg suggests that it might be the distinguishing *cholakapatta* of an Ardhaphalaka monk, though, admittedly, the damage to the sculpture makes it impossible to identify with certainty. If the nude figure does depict an Ardhaphalaka monk, then judging from the internal logic in the context of the narrative as a whole, this standing monk may represent Rishabhanatha just prior to his enlightenment, when he was a renunciant. Thus, the first Jina of our age, Rishabhanatha, may have been depicted by the Ardhaphalaka monks of circa late 2nd century BCE in the guise of an Ardhaphalaka monk.⁹

The early date of this relief has important implications for our understanding of the narrative tradition in the art of Mathura. Though narrative art was common at other sites in India prior to the 2nd century CE, it has been believed that Mathura all but completely lacked a narrative tradition in pre-Kushan art. This example, dating to around the late 2nd century BCE, on the basis of its angular, stiff, and archaic features that link it to a time not far removed from the Shunga carvings at Bharhut (circa latter half of the 2nd century BCE), is among the earliest bas reliefs recovered from Mathura. Furthermore, it is remarkable in its clear representation of the earliest known, positively identifiable depiction of Jina icons in anthropomorphic form from all of India. In this matter, this relief is possibly one of the first of its kind in the iconic tradition and at the forefront of a movement which would later impact the Buddhist tradition of Mathura as well. After the late 2nd century BCE, iconic, anthropomorphic forms of the Jina were portrayed in art more and more frequently and often together with Ardhaphalaka monks, until their apparent demise around the end of the 3rd century CE. During the Kushan period, the majority of the Jina icons are depicted with Ardhaphalaka



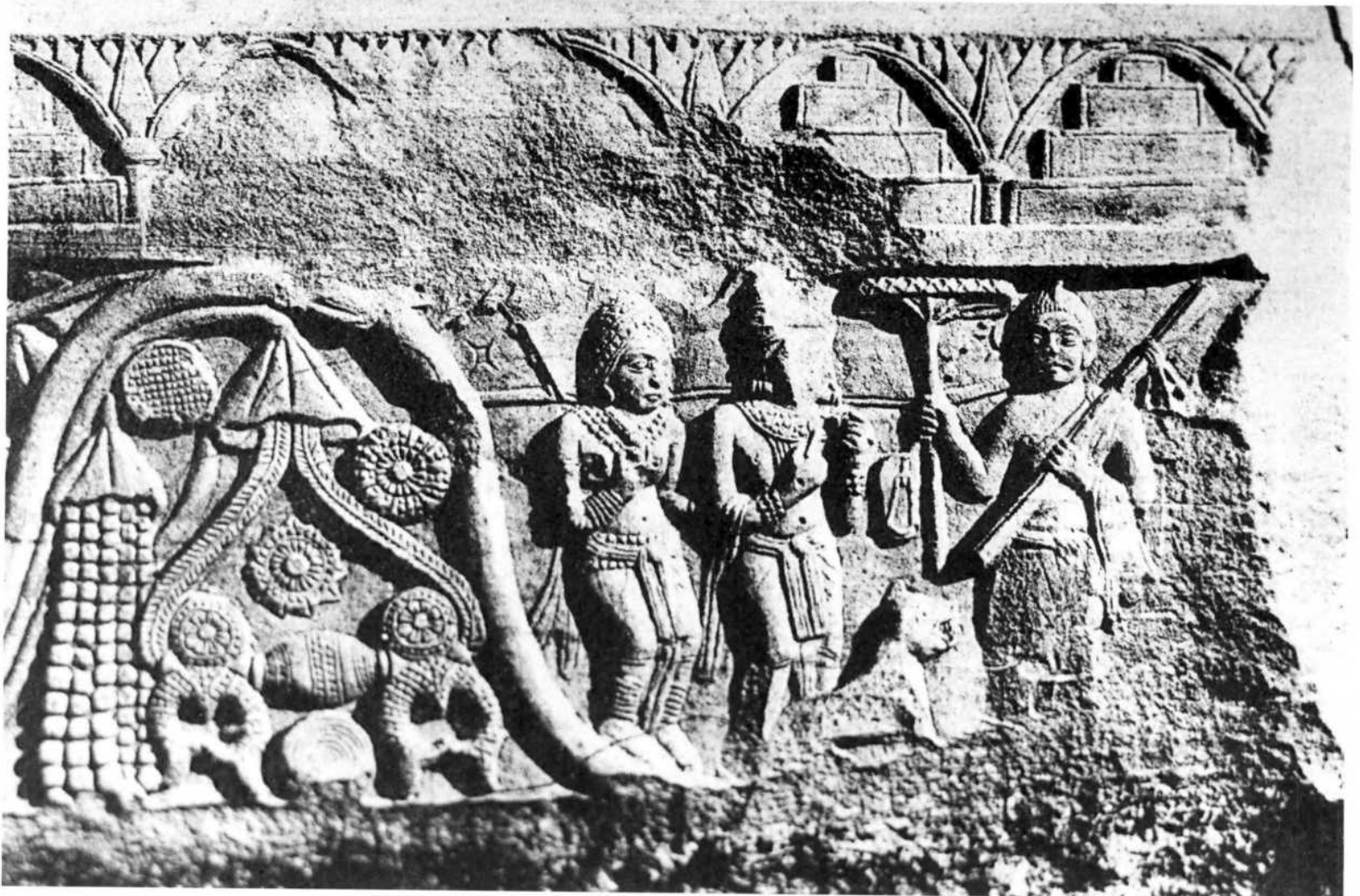
5

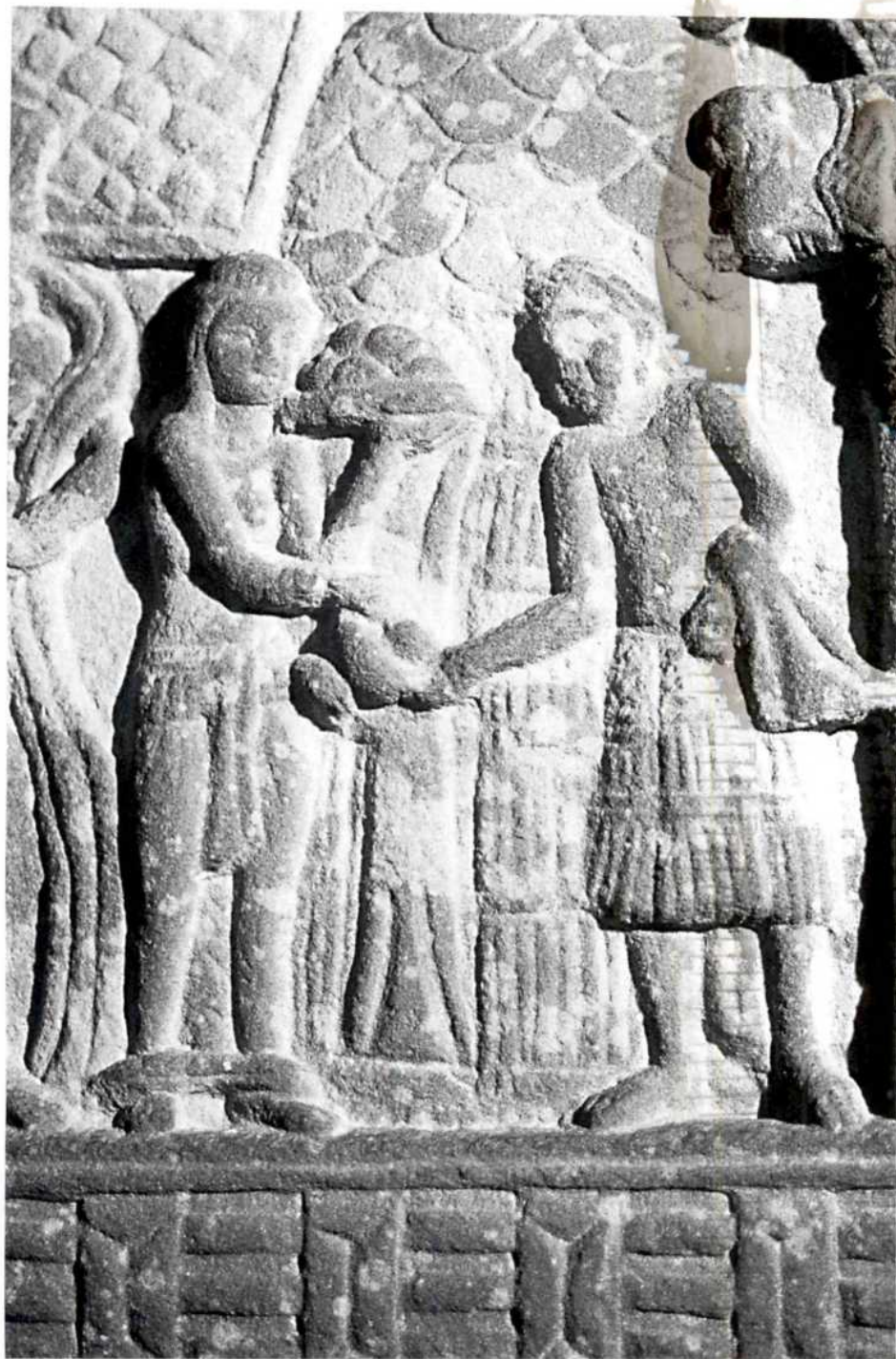
Veneration of the Jina Parshvanatha by two Ardhaphalaka monks; detail of the centre of an *ayagapata*. Mathura, early 1st century CE. Spotted red sandstone; height (of entire plaque) 86 cm, width 94 cm. State Museum, Lucknow (J.253). Photograph: S.R. Quintanilla, courtesy State Museum, Lucknow.



6
Detail from the Renunciation of Rishabhanatha. Mathura, late 2nd century BCE. Pink sandstone. State Museum, Lucknow (SML J.354/609). Photograph: S.R. Quintanilla, courtesy State Museum, Lucknow.

7
Detail from the coping stone depicting the *Mahabodhi Jataka*. Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh, circa mid-2nd century BCE. Plum sandstone. Indian Museum, Calcutta. Photograph: After A.K. Coomaraswamy, *La Sculpture de Bharhut*, Paris, 1956, fig. 137.





8
Rishishringa, the brahman ascetic, and the Princess Shanta; detail from a rail post. Govindnagar, Mathura. Government Museum, Mathura (76.40). Photograph: S.R. Quintanilla, courtesy Government Museum, Mathura.

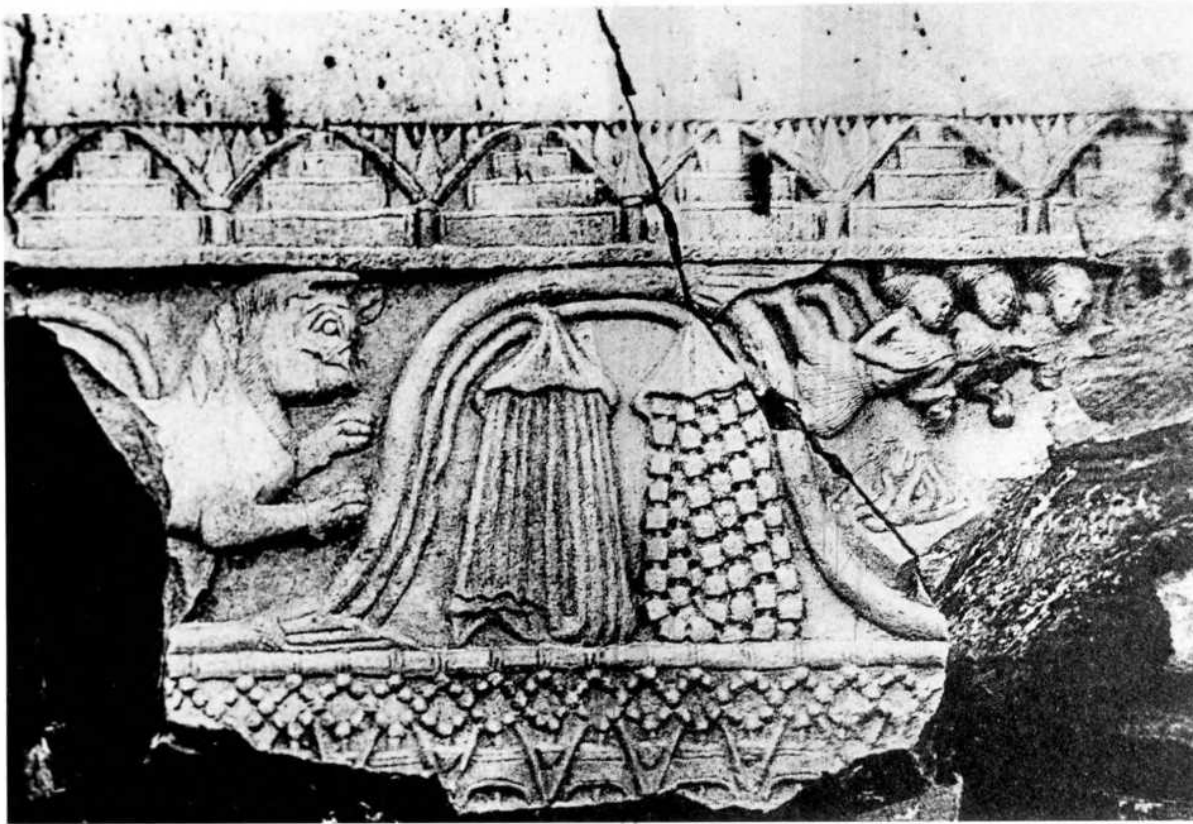
monks on their pedestals, and, moreover, among the six pre-Kushan depictions of Ardhamphalaka monks, three may well have been shown next to the figure of a Jina (figures 4–6). It appears that Jain monks of the Ardhamphalaka sect were responsible for popularizing the iconic image cult of the Jinas at Mathura much earlier than it is known at other regions.¹⁰

The representations of Ardhamphalaka monks in the art of pre-Kushan Mathura reveal otherwise unknown information regarding this sect. Although no texts outlining their tenets are available, we can affirm from their sculpted depictions that they adhered to

the distinctively Jain rules of non-violence, as they carried the *mukhapattika* and the whisk broom. Since they are depicted in the early sculptures as superior to gods, the Jain concept of the hierarchy of beings, in which Jain monks rank among the five most sacred types of persons (second only to the liberated Jinas themselves), while the celestial beings occupy a lesser status, already may have been current by the 2nd or 1st century BCE.¹¹ The portrayal in the Brooklyn Museum frieze of the Ardhamphalaka monk seated on a platform under a tree, being honoured by a layman or a god in *anjali-mudra*, confirms that they were considered worthy of veneration.

Although the pre-Kushan Ardhamphalaka monks adhered to these familiar tenets known from later Jainism, they also apparently followed some of the contemporaneous mores of Brahmanical ascetics and Buddhists. We can infer from their manner of wearing the *cholapatta* over the left forearm and holding it to the side that it was not used as a concealing garment in the earliest depictions (figure 3). Instead it was worn in the same way that brahman ascetics of the 2nd century BCE until the early 1st century CE wore the black antelope skin or a cloth – draped over the left forearm (figures 7 and 8). (This mode of wearing the black antelope skin over the left forearm differs from the more familiar manner of later epochs when brahman ascetics draped it over the left shoulder.) In addition, four of the pre-Kushan renditions of Ardhamphalaka monks (figures 1 and 2) show them holding water pots in the same way as did Brahmanical ascetics. Furthermore, the Ardhamphalaka monks displayed themselves as accomplished adepts who engaged in practices that could result in supernatural powers, such as the ability to fly through the air. The Brahmanical precedent for flying ascetics holding water pots is found in early sculptures such as those from the site of Bharhut (figure 9).

The noteworthy emphasis on stupa worship among the Jains of Mathura seems to be particularly confined to the period when the Ardhamphalakas were active. During the pre-



9

Brahman ascetics, detail from the coping stone. Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh, circa mid-2nd century BCE. Plum sandstone. Indian Museum, Calcutta. Photograph: After A.K. Coomaraswamy, *La Sculpture de Bharhut*, Paris, 1956, fig. 251.

Kushan period, when the Ardhapthalakas were apparently the only sect of Jain monks in Mathura, stupa worship is especially common and frequently occurs in Jain bas relief sculpture, as for example in figure 2. It is unclear whether Jains of any other region or time worshipped the stupa as much, if at all. Although there is no evidence for an earthly relic cult among the Jains, the Ardhapthalakas appropriated the form of the otherwise typically Buddhist sacred monument, and included it in their sanctuaries and repertoire of objects of worship.

It is interesting to note that among the representations of Ardhapthalaka monks datable to the Kushan period, the aforementioned aspects associated with Brahmanical asceticism are no longer present, and the emphasis on stupa worship is significantly muted. I have been unable to find examples of Ardhapthalaka monks in Kushan sculptures who fly through the air, carry the small water pot, or hold the *cholakatta* casually to the side. They do, however, consistently carry the distinctively Jain *mukhapattika* and *rajoharana*, and they use the *cholakatta* basically as an article of clothing. Thus, members of the Ardhapthalaka sect, before their gradual integration into the

mainstream canonical Shvetambara group of Jains in the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE, seem to have been remarkably open and receptive to non-Jain practices, which they incorporated and made their own. Such openness suggests that they could have been similarly receptive to incorporating modes of practice and worship – such as the veneration of iconic images, stupas, or trees – that were popular among the followers of neighbouring Brahmanical, Buddhist, and folk cults in pre-Kushan Mathura. Pre-Kushan Jain art from Mathura does emphasize devotion to these and other kinds of sacred objects and monuments. Far more anthropomorphic Jina images have been recovered from Mathura than from any other site in India between the 2nd century BCE and 1st century CE, the period during which the Ardhapthalaka sect apparently was dominant at Mathura. Indeed, more Jain icons have been found at Mathura even of the Kushan period of the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE (when the Ardhapthalakas were still extant, though evidently in the process of integrating within the Shvetambara community) than from any other contemporaneous site in India. Hence, it seems likely that the Ardhapthalaka monks of Mathura played a major role in popularizing

the image cult of early Jainism – a popularization to which their heterodox rivals for lay support, the Buddhists, seem to have at least to some degree directly responded when they introduced iconic images of the Buddha about a century later than the earliest known iconic images of Jinās. This group of reliefs depicting Ardhaphalaka monks from pre-Kushan Mathura offers a rare glimpse into the existence, views, and practices of an early phase of this important and as yet rather elusive Jain sect. The Ardhaphalaka Jains may have been responsible for implementing major influential traditions at Mathura, the implications and significance of which are just now beginning to be recognized.

NOTES

1 A detailed study of the art of pre-Kushan Mathura from numerous museum and private collections in India, Europe, and America is presented in my doctoral dissertation: *Emergence of the Stone Sculptural Tradition of Mathura: Mid-Second Century B.C. – First century A.D.*, PhD dissertation, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (1999). An expanded version will be available in a monograph, *Early Sculpture of Mathura (Mid-Second Century B.C. to First Century A.D.)*. I would like to thank Dr P. Pal for inviting me to contribute this article to *Marg*. I also wish to extend my gratitude to Mr John E. Dawson at the National Museum, New Delhi; Dr S.D. Trivedi, former Director, and Mr Verma of the State Museum, Lucknow; Mr Jitendra Kumar, former Director, and Mr Girraj Prasad, Guide Lecturer, of the Government Museum, Mathura; and Ms Amy Poster, Curator of Asian Art at the Brooklyn Museum of Art for being of great help and kindly granting me access to study and photograph the sculptures in their museums published herein.

2 The earliest texts to refer to partially clothed Jain ascetics (*ardhaphalakam*) are the 10th-century CE *Bṛhatkathākośa* of Harisena and the *Uttarā-dhyayana Nirukti* of Bhadrabahu II of around the 5th century CE.

3 Adalbert J. Gail identified a monk of the Ardhaphalaka sect in a relief from Gandhara, but that figure is better identified as an Ajivika, in accordance with textual sources. Moreover the

nude figure in Gandharan *parinirvana* reliefs does not wear the distinctive *cholapatta* draped over his left forearm, and thus is different from the type seen at Mathura. Adalbert J. Gail, "Ein Jain-Monch beim Parinirvana des Buddha", in *Festschrift: Klaus Bruhn zur Vollendung des 65. Lebensjahres dargebracht von Schülern, Freunden und Kollegen*, ed. Nalini Balbir and Joachim K. Bautze, Reinbek (1994): 333-37.

4 N.P. Joshi, "Early Jaina Icons from Mathura", in *Mathura: The Cultural Heritage*, ed. Doris M. Srinivasan, p. 347. Padmanabh S. Jaini has carefully discussed the Buddhist and Jain literary accounts that are relevant to the Ardhaphalaka sect in terms of their representations on Jina pedestals of the Kushan period. Padmanabh S. Jaini, "Jaina Monks from Mathura: Literary Evidence for their Identification on Kushan Sculptures", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. LVIII, pt. 3 (1995): 479-94. He also excerpts the stories found in medieval Jain literature that account for why the Ardhaphalakas wore the *cholapatta* (pp. 480-84). Jaini proposes that this sect might alternatively be called *ekasataka nigantha*, since such "one-cloth Jains" are mentioned in Buddhist literature. It is unlikely that they are Yapaniyas, which is the name of another Jain sect which has been identified with the Ardhaphalakas of Mathura. The Yapaniyas were associated with the nude Digambaras, whereas the Ardhaphalakas became part of the rival Shvetāmbara group of Jain monks by the end of the 3rd century CE.

5 The Jain tympanum from Kankali-Tila at Mathura is housed in the National Museum, New Delhi (Acc. no. J.555). See P. Pal, ed., *The Peaceful Liberators: Jain Art from India*, Los Angeles (1994): 103.

6 State Museum, Lucknow, B.207. See N.P. Joshi, "Early Jaina Icons from Mathura", pl. 34.X.

7 For a comprehensive description and analysis of the *ayagapata*, see S.R. Quintanilla, "Ayagapatas: Characteristics, Symbolism, and Chronology", *Artibus Asiae*, vol. LX, no. 1, 2000, pp. 79-137. The *ayagapata* with Parshvanatha (the detail of which is in figure 5), is the only known example that includes depictions of Ardhaphalaka monks in the central circle. Three others depict a Jina seated alone in the central circle, one depicts a Jina flanked by attendant divinities, three have solar symbols (sixteen-spoked wheel or full-blown lotus flower), and one has a stupa. The other

surviving examples of *ayagapata* plaques are broken, so that the contents of their central circles are unidentifiable.

8 The entire relief is published in U.P. Shah, *Jaina Rupa Mandana*, New Delhi (1987), pl. X, fig. 18.

9 The appearance of the smaller, now headless, depiction of a standing nude ascetic to the lower right of the larger monk is difficult to interpret. He holds an alms bowl in his left hand and grasps a small cloth in his right. It could represent an even earlier phase in Rishabhanatha's career as a renunciant. Alternatively, it could represent the sole example in the known pre-Kushan art of Mathura of a Jain monk belonging to a different sect whose adherents did not wear the *cholapatta* over their left forearms; or he also could represent a non-Jain ascetic, such as an Ajivika.

10 In the extensive Jain reliefs at Udayagiri and Khandagiri in Orissa of the 2nd to 1st centuries BCE, Jinas are not depicted in human form. Only non-figural symbols are worshipped. See Debala Mitra, *Udayagiri and Khandagiri*, New Delhi (1975), especially pls. VIII, B and XIV, B. The hoard of bronze Jina figures discovered at Chausa in Bihar comprises examples that date no earlier than the 2nd century CE.

11 The *panchaarameshthins*, or five most sacred beings, in Jainism include monks and ascetics, while various celestial beings (*kinnara*, *gandharva*, *dikpala*, etc.) occupy a lesser status. See U.P. Shah, *Jaina Rupa Mandana*, p. 60.



Tomb of Subhan: A Little-known Monument of the Lodi Period

Subhash Parihar

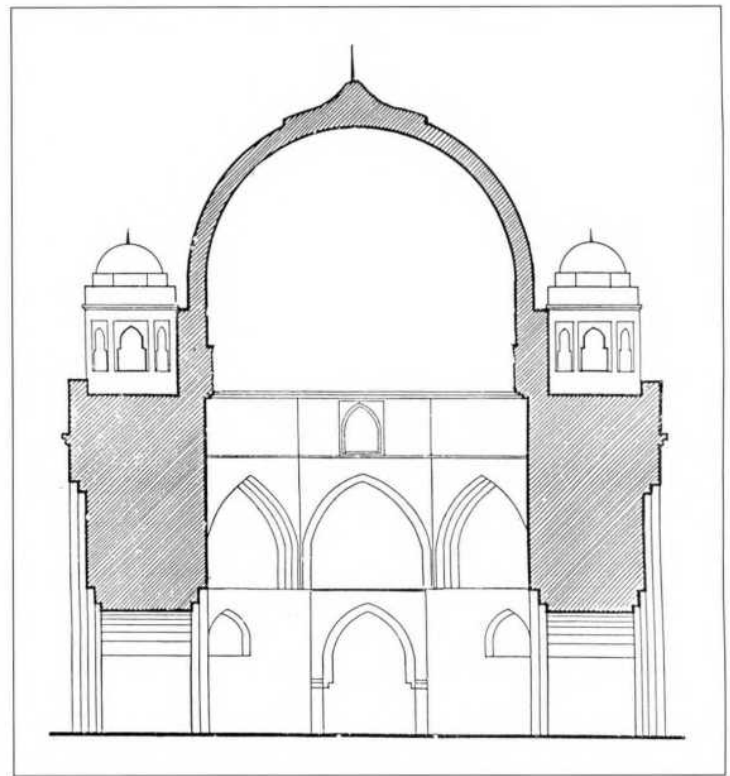
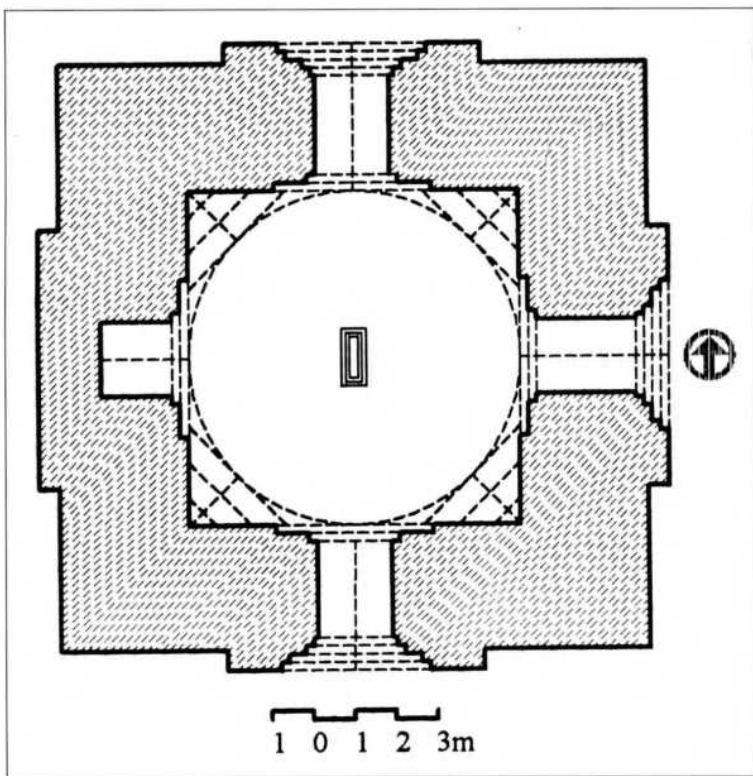
The reign of the Afghan-descended Lodi dynasty (1451–1526), the last of the five dynasties of the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526), witnessed an upsurge in architectural activity, represented for the most part by funerary monuments.¹ So much so that even after centuries of ravages by man and nature, more than a hundred tombs built during the period still survive in Delhi alone. These monuments have been documented and studied in some detail by a number of scholars.² Building activity during the period was not limited to the city of Delhi. Some impressive monuments were raised in other parts too, but the monuments situated outside Delhi have not hitherto been paid the attention they deserve. The tomb of Subhan, daughter of Sultan Bahlul Lodi (1451–89), outside the village Dera Mir Miran, near Sirhind (Punjab), is one such monument (figure 3).³ Locally, the mausoleum is known as the tomb of Mir Miran. Some people also call it the tomb of Bibi Haj. Alexander Cunningham in his brief note on the tomb considers it one of the most pleasing as well as one of the most perfect specimens of later Pathan architecture.⁴ It is probably also the first known tomb of the Sultanate period built for a lady.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING

The tomb is made of bluish grey sandstone – a material very rarely used in the plains of

the Punjab – and *kankar*. The stone was procured by demolishing an ancient monument, as is evident from some intact beautifully carved pilasters built into the southern and eastern sides of the drum of the dome and some other carved details (figures 4 and 5).⁵ Water-spouts on the roof of the mausoleum were also originally parts of the older structure.

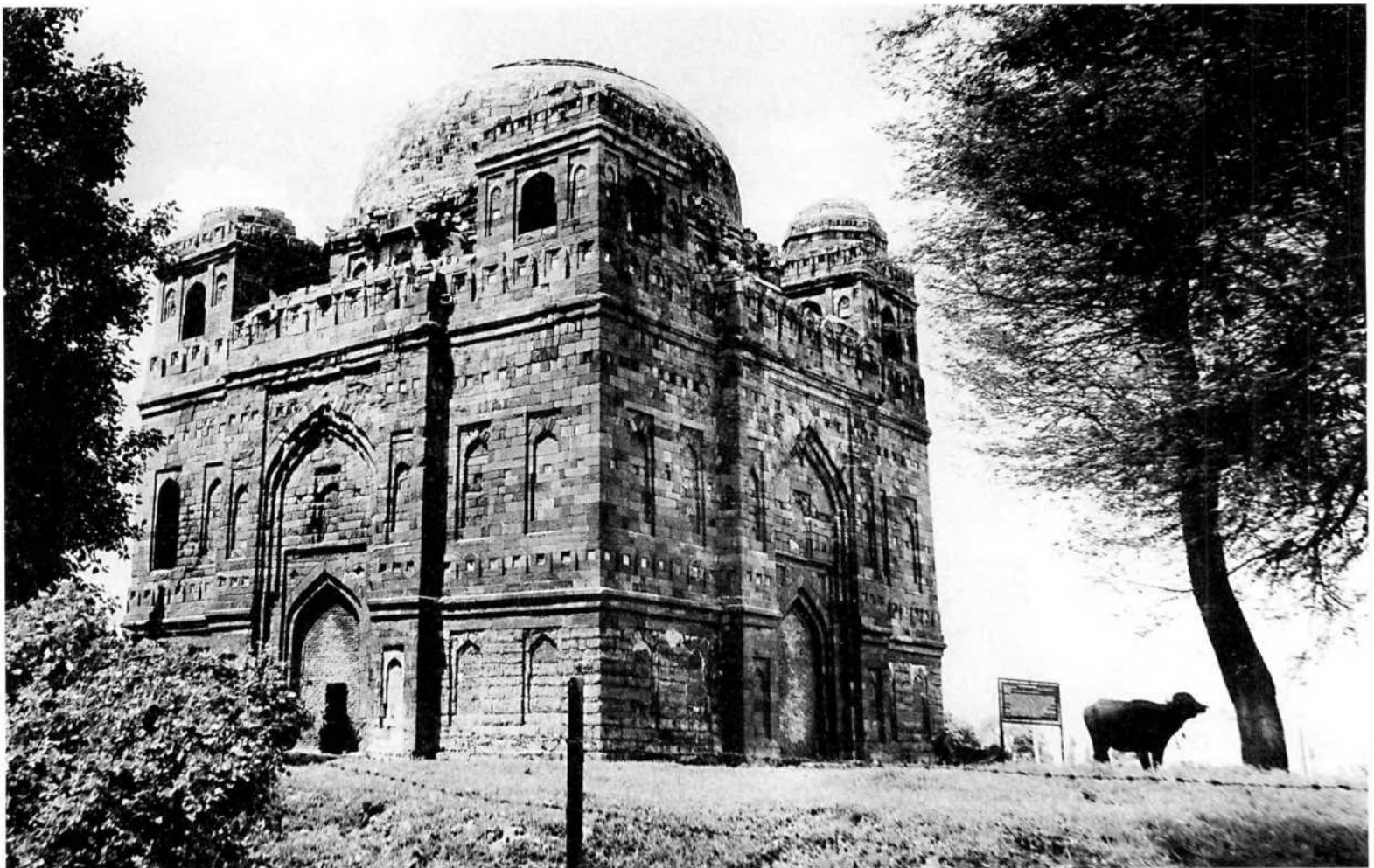
The building stands on a 41 m square platform with a projection measuring 7.4 x 6.2 m on the eastern side. The structure is square in plan (figure 1). Each of its sides measures 14.2 m on the exterior and 8.0 m on the interior. Each side of the building has a bay projecting half a metre beyond the wall. But for the western one, each projection contains a large recessed arch, pierced by a 1.8 m broad doorway.⁶ The gently sloping walls of the building are relieved with two storeys of recesses, crowned with decorative crenellation. A 0.8 m broad flight of steps, starting from a very high point in the southern wall approaches the roof. The parapet of the building is 10 m high from the platform and a little higher in the middle. Each corner of the roof is marked with a square pavilion of 3.1 m side, a sort of replica of the building itself, open on each side and covered with a dome resting on an octagonal drum. In the centre of the roof rises an octagonal drum of 4.5 m side, each face of which is relieved with three



1
Plan of the tomb.

2
Section of the tomb.

3
Tomb of Subhan at Sirhind.



4

Carved pilasters built into the southern side of the drum of the dome.



5

Stone carved with *makara* motif built into the western side of the drum of the dome.



TOMB OF SUBHAN

sunken panels. On the drum rests a stilted hemispherical dome. It appears that the dome was originally covered with a layer of plaster to prevent leakage. The finial is missing now.

The walls of the interior also have sunken recesses and the western wall accommodates a semi-domed mihrab (figure 6). An arch, recessed in three planes, spans each corner of the interior, converting the square of the chamber into an octagon above which rises the domical ceiling (figure 2).

At present, the tomb enshrines only one ruined grave, though Rodgers mentions one more in the tomb.⁷

DECORATION

Two forms of decoration appear on the building. Some carved medallions appear here and there, both on the exterior and interior of the building. There is a carved flower medallion on either side of each entrance. The mihrab is also flanked by a shallow carved geometrical design and framed with a Quranic inscription. The upper sunken panels on the exterior bear the word Allah carved in them.

The other form of decoration on the building is the use of turquoise glazed tiles. Each battlement of the two rows of decorative crenellation encircling the building and one row forming the parapet of the octagonal drum has one square glazed tile.⁸ The average size of the tiles is 20 cm square. The colour of most of the tiles has come off.

INSCRIPTIONS

The tomb bears the following five inscriptions.⁹

1) On the eastern facade. Left-hand red sandstone tablet; 40 x 37 cm; Naskh (figure 7):

Text:

*Rahlat kard Padshahzah Subhan bint
Bahlul Shah Sultan
Yazdahm mah-i Safar ruz-i Jum'a sana
ihda wa tis'miya
Bina-i in Hazira dar 'ahd-i Shah-i jahan
Sikandar Shah Sultan khullada mulkuhu,
sana 902*

Translation:

Passed away (from this world) princess Subhan, daughter of Bahlul Shah Sultan on the 11th of the month of Safar, Friday, Year one and nine hundred (11 safar 901) and the construction of this mausoleum (took place) in the reign of the king of the world Sikandar Shah Sultan, may his kingdom last for ever! (in the) year 902.

The inscription very clearly states that the tomb was built for Subhan, daughter of Sultan Bahlul Lodi, who died on 11 Safar 901/ October 31, 1495, during the reign of Sikandar Lodi (1489–1517). The year 902 (began September 9, 1496) given at the end of the inscription must have been the date of completion of the tomb.

The inscription is of singular significance for, besides providing the exact identification and date of construction of the monument, it also gives the name of the otherwise unknown daughter of Bahlul Lodi. Interestingly, the name of another daughter of the Sultan is also known from an inscription, discovered from Kotla Mubarakpur, Delhi (now preserved in the Archaeological Museum, Red Fort, Delhi, Exhibit no. 40/1009). This bilingual inscription records the construction of a well at the wish of the princess Ayisha and is dated



6
Mihrab with inscriptions in the western wall of the tomb.



20 Safar 923/March 14, 1517.¹⁰

2) On the eastern facade. Right-hand red sandstone tablet; 40.0 x 35.5 cm; Arabic; Naskh:

Second Creed: I bear witness that there is no god but etc.

3 & 4) On the northern and western walls of the interior; 40 x 29 cm and 51.0 x 39.5 cm; Arabic: *Quran*, LIX, verses 21–22 and part of verse 23.

5) On the wall framing the mihrab. 84 x 65 cm; Arabic (figure 6): It contains the words Allah (twice), Bismillah, First Creed, *Quran*, LXI, verse 13 (part); XII, verse 64 (part), and invocations to Allah – O Sufficient! O Sufficer! O Provender! Allah is Sufficient.

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

Dr H. Goetz who studied some tombs of Sirhind in October 1938, traces the stylistic origin of the tomb of Subhan (referred to by him as the tomb of Mir Miran) in the monuments of the Deccan.¹¹ But one can find parallels nearer home. The tomb under study follows the general pattern of the square type tombs built in Delhi during the Lodi period, namely, Bara Gumbad (1490) and Shish Gumbad (circa 1490), in Lodi Gardens, Chhote Khan-ka Gumbad (1490) and Bare Khan-ka Gumbad (c. 1510), both at Kotla Mubarakpur, Tomb of Shihab al-Din Taj Khan (1510) and Dadi-ka Gumbad, both at Hauz Khas. The following lines of Percy Brown describing the Delhi tombs are equally true for the Sirhind tomb:

The two or three stories forming their elevation are not definite floors, but merely arcaded zones introduced as architectural decoration to their facades. These facades are so designed as to have the central portion in the shape of a rectangle, projected and containing a larger recessed archway occupying nearly the total height of the structure almost to the parapet.... The "stories" of the facade are formed or arched recesses in sunk rectangular panels.... A square single chamber comprises the interior which is square in plan, with sunk archways occupying each side, that on the west containing the mihrab. In each corner is a squinch arch to support the base of the dome.¹²

The tombs at Delhi as well as the one at Sirhind make use of square turquoise tiles for decoration. However, there are some differences of detail. The Delhi examples have doorways of the beam-and-bracket order but the Sirhind tomb has arched doorways formed by radiating voussoirs. The corners of the Delhi tombs are marked either by minarets or *chhatris*, but the Sirhind tomb has square pavilions. And lastly, whereas the Delhi specimens have no sloping parts, all the lines and planes being true and vertical, a slight slope still persists in the walls of the Sirhind tomb which continued even in the monuments of the town built during the Mughal period.

ORIGIN OF THE TRADITIONAL NAMES

Having established the exact identity of the person interred in the tomb, the origins of its popular names, the tombs of Mir Miran and Bibi Haj, are also worth noting.

Mir Miran is not a name but a title which was in use during the Sultanate and Mughal periods.¹³ Rodgers also records the name of Mir Miran, Saiyid Amir, which must have been prevalent at the time of his visit to Sirhind in the year 1888–89.¹⁴ Also it is believed that Mir Miran was a saintly man to whom Sultan Bahlul gave one of his daughters in marriage. The marriage of the Sultan's daughter to a

saint is also recorded by Muhammad Sadiq Dihlawi Kashmiri Hamadani as early as 1614, in his work *Kalimat al-Sadiqin*.¹⁵ He gives the name of the saint as Shah 'Abd Allah Quraishi,¹⁶ a follower of Shaikh Baha al-Din Zakariya of Multan. But the author does not give the name of the daughter of the Sultan. If she was Subhan, Mir Miran might have been the title conferred upon Shah 'Abd Allah Quraishi. The second grave in the tomb as mentioned by Rodgers,¹⁷ could not have been that of Shah 'Abd Allah Quraishi whose grave existed somewhere near Old Delhi.¹⁸

The nearby village appears to have taken its name from this traditional name of the tomb.

The other popular name of the building – the tomb of Bibi Haj – referred, most probably, to one of the daughters of 'Aqil, brother of the fourth Caliph 'Ali.¹⁹ This is borne out by the fact that the nearby tomb is attributed to Bibi Taj, another daughter of 'Aqil.²⁰

SELECTION OF SIRHIND INSTEAD OF DELHI FOR THE TOMB

While the tomb of Subhan's father Sultan Bahlul Lodi (d. 1489) and that of her brother Sultan Sikandar Lodi (d. 1517) were built in Delhi, why was Sirhind selected for her tomb? Sirhind was the home-town of Bahlul Lodi who, after the death of his father, was brought up there by his uncle and future father-in-law, Malik Sultan Shah Lodi (also known by his title Islam Shah).²¹ Sultan Shah held the town as his fief. Some time before his death in Rajab 824/March 1431, the Malik nominated his nephew and son-in-law Bahlul to all his property and the leadership of the 12,000 Afghans under him.²² Bahlul's attachment to his home-town even after his accession to the throne of Delhi, is indicated by the fact that once while proceeding to Lahore, the Sultan on his arrival at Sirhind, ordered the wives of his *amirs* to settle there different *muhallas* (quarters) in their names.²³ It is probable that Subhan was the daughter of Bahlul from his Sirhindi wife. Subhan might have continued to live at Sirhind even after the accession of her father or she shifted there after his demise. Hence her tomb at Sirhind, not Delhi.

NOTES

1 Ara Matsuo opines that "the traditional relationship between the Afghan nobles and the sultan and the traditional spirit of self-reliance and independence among the tribes which prevailed particularly in the reigns of the former two Sultans [Bahlul Lodi and Sikandar Lodi] were...the principal factors which gave rise to the rage for building large-scale tomb-buildings equal to or even surpassing those of the sultans and other rulers and which turned the whole Delhi area into a 'tomb town'." "The Lodhi Rulers and the Construction of Tomb-Buildings in Delhi", *Acta Asiatica*, vol. XLIII (1982), p. 78.

2 For complete documentation of the monuments of the period in Delhi, see Yamamoto Tatsuro, Ara Matsuo, and Tsukinowa Tokifusa, *Delhi: The Architectural Remains of the Delhi Sultanate Period*, Japanese, 3 vols., Tokyo, 1967–70. For analysis of the monuments, the following works may be seen: Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)*, Bombay, rpt. 1975, pp. 26–30; Satish Grover, *The Architecture of India: Islamic (727–1707 A.D.)*, Delhi, 1981, pp. 139–47; R. Nath, *History of Sultanate Architecture*, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 76–83; Simon Digby, "The Tomb of Bahlul Lodi", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. XXXVIII (1975), pp. 550–61; Z.A. Desai, "The Bara-Gumbad Mosque Inscription and its Bearing on the Identification of Shish-Gumbad and Bara-Gumbad", *K.V. Soundrarajan Festschrift Volume*, vol. I, ed. C. Margabandhu et al., Delhi, 1991, pp. 281–89.

3 The tomb is in a good state of preservation. It is one of the protected monuments of the Department of Archaeology, Punjab.

4 Alexander Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Reports*, vol. II, rpt. Varanasi, 1972, p. 209.

5 The iconoclasm of Sultan Sikandar Lodi for whose sister this tomb was built, is well known. Medieval historian 'Abd Allah writes that "(Sikandar was) so partial to Islam that he destroyed Hindu temples and obliterated all traces of them. Whenever possible, he destroyed Hindu temples including those of Muttra (Mathura)..." *Tarikh-i Da'udi*, ed. S.A. Rashid, Aligarh, 1969, p. 37. Charles Rodgers mentions a *makara* head used as a gargoyle. *Report of the Punjab Circle of the Archaeological Survey for the Year 1888–89*, Calcutta, 1891, p. 5. This part is not extant but the

makara motif in carved relief is still seen on the drum of the dome. Some other remains of the ancient structure also survive in the form of pillars lying in the gurdwara and streets of the nearby village.

6 Some years back, the Department of Archaeology, Punjab, bricked up all the three doorways.

7 Rodgers, op. cit., p. 5.

8 In Philip Davies' *The Penguin Guide to the Monuments of India*, vol. II, *Islamic, Rajput and European* (Viking, 1989, p. 163), it is wrongly written that the walls of this tomb "are clad in blue encaustic tiles". Not only this but the account of the other monuments of Sirhind in this guide is not accurate.

9 All the inscriptions in the article were deciphered and translated by Dr Z.A. Desai, Former Director, Epigraphy Branch, Archaeological Survey of India. I am grateful to him.

10 Pushpa Prasad, *Sanskrit Inscriptions of Delhi Sultanate*, Delhi, 1990, pp. 37–38.

11 H. Goetz, "Pathan Tombs of Sirhind", *Islamic Culture*, vol. XIII (1939), p. 315.

12 P. Brown, op. cit., pp. 27–28.

13 The title Mir Miran occurs in an inscription dated c. 13th century, on the inner face of the northern wall of the grave of Shah Ni'mat Allah in Hansi Fort (Hisar district, Haryana). *Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy (1971–72)*, New Delhi, 1981, p. 76; *Epigraphica Indo-Moslemica (1913–14)*, p. 35, no. XX, pl. XVI.

An inscription from Gujarat shows the use of the title during the reign of Firuz Shah (1351–88). Z.A. Desai, *Persian and Arabic Epigraphy of Gujarat*, Baroda, 1982, p. 18.

There are several examples of the use of the title during the Mughal period. For example, see *Babur Nama*, tr. A.S. Beveridge, rpt. Delhi, 1979, pp. 174, 376–77, 389, 391, 424, 459–60, and 525; *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, vol. I, tr. A. Rogers, ed. H. Beveridge, rpt. Delhi, 1968, pp. 371–72; B. Ch. Chhabra, N. Lakshminarayan Rao, and M. Ashraf Husain, "Ten Years of Indian Epigraphy (1937–46)", *Ancient India*, vol. V, Delhi, January 1949, p. 61.

14 Rodgers, op. cit., p. 5.

15 Muhammad Sadiq Dihlawi Kashmiri Hamadani, *The Kalimat al-Sadiqin*, ed. Muhammad Saleem Akhtar, Islamabad, 1988, introduction p. 70 and text p. 106.

16 Maulvi 'Abdul Muqtadir writes that "Shah 'Abd Ullah Quraishi...married his daughter to Sultan

Bahlul Lodi...." *Descriptive Catalogue of the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library*, vol. VIII, p. 41.

However, it is contrary to the facts and is not substantiated by the original manuscript.

'Abd Allah's son Shaikh Rukn al-Din, after his father's death, rose to the position of Shaikh al-Islam. Sadiq Dihlawi, op. cit., p. 72.

17 Rodgers, op. cit., p. 5.

18 Sadiq Dihlawi, op. cit., text p. 106.

19 A shrine at Lahore, known as the tomb of Bibi Pak Daman or the Chaste Lady, is also said to be that of Bibi Haj. S.M. Latif, *Lahore: Its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities*, Lahore, 1892, p. 213.

20 Bibi Haj and Bibi Taj, according to Islamic tradition, were famous for piety and asceticism. Mufti Ghulam Sarwar Lahori records the following tradition about them:

After the death of Imam Husain at Karbala, all the five daughters of 'Aqil left Syria for India in obedience to a secret intimation. They alighted outside Lahore at a place named Gulbadan and where their shrine now is. They converted many of the town's people to their faith, and thus angered the presumably Hindu governor. He sent his son to command their departure, but the son fell under their influence, and remained near them. This still more angered the father, who went out against them and their followers with an armed force. The ladies prayed that their honour might be preserved, and they not be seen by strange men. Immediately, the earth opened and swallowed them.

Khazinat al-'Asafiya, vol. II, Kanpur, 1914, p. 407.

21 For some details of his career, see Yahya Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi*, tr. H. Beveridge, rpt. Delhi, 1986, pp. 196, n. 1; 202, n. 2; 216, 220, 224–26, 228–29, 234, 237, and 251.

22 Muhammad Qasim Firishta, *Tarikh-i Firishta*, tr. John Briggs under the title *History of the Rise of Mahomedan Power in India*, vol. I, rpt. Delhi, 1990, p. 317.

23 Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i Shahi* (also known as *Tarikh-i Salatin-i Afaghina*), ed. M. Hidayat Hosain, Calcutta, 1939, pp. 16–17.

FIGURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All illustrations by the author.

Delhi is now being glutted with culture. It's an annual feature, when impresarios and institutions try to cram a year's worth of cultural events into our few seasonable months. Not only are we treated to non-stop concerts and conferences, performances and retrospectives from the denizens of our own land; as the capital city, Delhi gets to be first stop on most events that are brought to our shores from abroad. Currently under way is the German Festival in India, a year-long celebration concocted by Dr Georg Lechner, who was director of the Max Mueller Bhavans at Delhi, Calcutta, and Mumbai and then became Programme Director for the German Cultural Centres worldwide. The German feast includes ballet, theatre, music, films, and symposia; also two art exhibitions: "Ornament and Figure: Medieval Art from Germany" at the National Museum, and "Contemporary Arts and Crafts from Germany" at the Crafts Museum.

It is always a pleasure to visit the Crafts Museum, and as I walked to the gallery housing the German exhibition, I enjoyed once again the museum's outdoor tree shrines with clusters of votive figures, the carved wooden posts and terracotta tile-roofs of the verandahs, the great groups of grain and water jars in the passage, the dimly lit gallery of Bhuta sculptures, and the intricately carved temple *ratha* in the courtyard adjacent to the gallery. Indoors, the contrast was a sharp shock. I saw a vast, elegant, minimal space with beautifully understated pedestals and cases holding a few spotlit objects. The divergence in the

modes of display for the objects outside and inside the hall brought home the difference in the notion of the "craftsman" in a highly industrialized country like Germany on the one hand, and a developing one like ours, on the other.

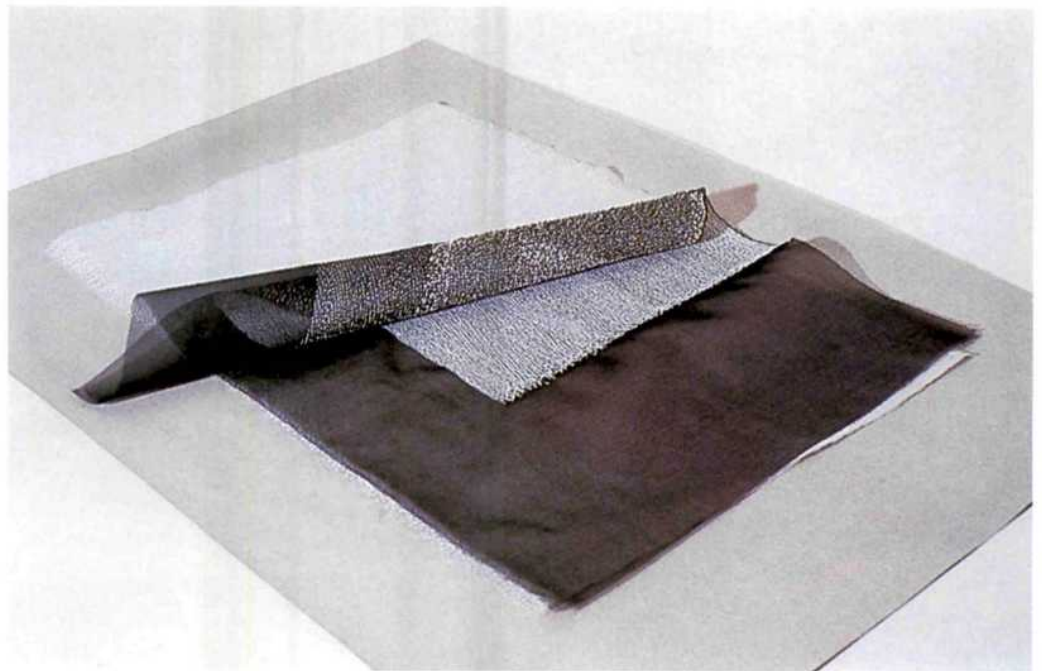
In India, the word "craftsman" is generally used for a practitioner who comes from a traditional artisan family. In industrialized nations, the link across generations of artisans was broken; the word craftsman is now applied to those who work in the materials that are traditionally thought of as craft material – such as textile, ceramic, wood, glass, and jewellery – but the practitioners learn their craft through the same colleges and academies as the fine artists, and it is little wonder that their works aspire to the same status and condition as "art". A subtext in much "craft" produced in advanced nations is a questioning of the traditional notions of craft. For instance craft objects were generally meant to be functional and decorative; thus the work of some contemporary craftsmen might be wilfully non-utilitarian and anti-aesthetic.

One of the most interesting features of the German craft exhibition was its dissection of the differing philosophy and aesthetics of craft production on either side of the Iron Curtain. In the period between World Wars I and II, the famous Bauhaus school in Weimar attempted to find a place for artists in an age of mass production. There artists began to develop prototypes of beautiful, utilitarian objects that could be produced industrially. Machine and man were partners in a mutually enabling

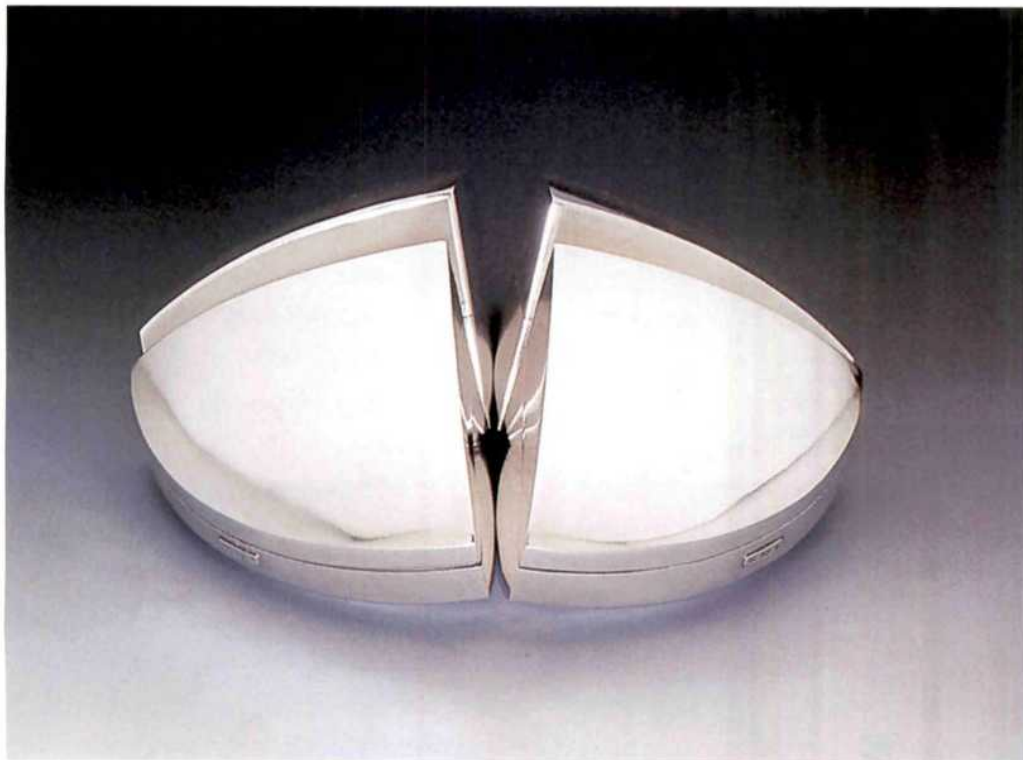
and ennobling process. The field of modern design was practically invented at the Bauhaus.

After World War II, with the division of Germany into East and West, the aesthetic of craft also diverged. In the West, craftsmen who made things by hand dwindled in number and these few worked directly for a small number of customers. The mainstream activity became product design, for the industrial production of ever sleeker and smoother objects. In the East, craftsmen were lauded as members of the worker class and they were given greater public support including official commissions. Another feature that strengthened the craft movement in East Germany was the perception that unlike "art" which could carry messages, craft was non-political, and was therefore a safe medium to both practice and patronize. East German "craftsmen" flourished, often tending to stress in their work the natural irregularity of organic materials, fragmentary forms, accidental effects, and visible traces left on the object by the shaping process, very unlike the smooth and highly finished products fabricated by the West Germans.

It is hard to single out just a few works for praise from this absorbing exhibition, but here in India we seldom see bravura glassworks of the type in this show. The textiles too were particularly interesting for an Indian audience. We still have such a wealth of textile production, but hardly anybody pursues the sculptural possibilities of cloth – woven, stitched, pierced, and hung – in the manner of the participants



1
Heidrun Schimmel,
"Peeling" II, 1998–99.
42 x 30 cm.
Property of the artist.



2
Beatrice Polter,
"Four Cansisters"
(design object), 1985.
Silver; each 5.5 x 7.5 cm.
Museum für Kunst und
Gewerbe, Hamburg.

of this show. Heidrun Schimmel's work – layers of gauzy black and white fabric, sometimes embroidered with small white stitches in random patterns – made beautiful, meditative Nasreen-Mohammedi-like assemblages that spoke volumes in a soft voice.

Compared to the craft exhibition, the "high art" show from Germany was disappointing. "Ornament and Figure: Medieval Art from Germany", an exhibition on loan from the German National Museum, consisted of

decorative objects in wood, stone, metal, architectural fragments, some leaves of book illumination, and some sketched designs. The exhibition was intended to bring a sampling of the rich tradition of medieval European ornament to India, a country with its own distinctive tradition of ornamentation. Unlike the other German show however there was very little by way of explanatory text that would help the viewer understand what he was seeing and put it in context. Many of

the objects were also very small, such as coins and seals, and were poorly lit, making them difficult to see. Had we been given one thread to follow through the show – say the arabesque – it would have been easier to trace developments through the exhibition. As it was, the exhibition seemed more like a motley group of objects, a few of them stunning, such as the engravings by Aldegrever and Durer.

On this trip to the National Museum, however, the real pleasure was to see



3

Space-filler with mask,
by Sebald Beham
(1500–50). Monogrammed
“HSB” and dated 1543.
Copper ornamental
engraving; 5.3 x 8.0 cm.
Stadt Nürnberg.

the recently reopened Indus Valley gallery. Six months ago, a controversy had erupted over some new text panels in the gallery. These panels altered the nomenclature of the gallery – the civilization was renamed the Indus-Saraswati civilization and all sorts of untenable claims were made, including one that the language spoken by the Indus Valley people was “*laukik* (folk) Sanskrit”. Shabbily printed and filled with spelling and grammatical mistakes, this panel hung unashamedly side by side with the older introductory panel which said quite different things! A number of scholars had protested loudly over the ham-handed reinterpretation of this ancient and still mysterious civilization.

The gallery was then shut for several months for refurbishment. My expectations of the reopened gallery were low, and I was very pleasantly surprised to walk into the central corridor of the museum and find large, attractive translights of Harappan remains proclaiming the new gallery. Inside, there are bright and attractive maps, timelines, and conjectural reconstructions of some sites, and an introductory text that is a very subdued

version of the texts that caused the furore some months ago. The civilization is now called the Harappan civilization. While we are told to note the occurrence on seals of items significant in Hinduism today – the pipal, fire, yogic mudras, and Rudra worship (surely this is conjectural) – the text does say that what these symbols meant to the Indus Valley people is unknown as their script has not been deciphered. This seems a fair position to take in the middle of the great ideological tug-of-war that generally surrounds the interpretation of the Indus Valley remains.

The display of objects is much improved, with a cleaner, brighter look and a good selection of objects brought in from a very wide variety of sites. One is led thematically through the gallery, from the priest king (a plaster cast of the famous one in Karachi) and the dancing girl (the original is back on display) through to other figural sculptures, the trade objects such as the weights and measures, the fine jewellery, and the pottery. One is able to see well the extent of bronze casting, from everyday vessels to the spectacular Daimabad hoard with its

wonderful, sensitive sculptures.

Interestingly, there are also some quite fine terracotta sculptures of horses, which should add fuel to the fires burning under the question of who were the citizens of the great Harappan sites.

The museum has plans to refurbish all its galleries in stages, with modernized display and a good amount of explanatory text. While one can quibble with certain points of interpretation, it is a welcome move for the museum to try to be more user friendly, to display more of the precious objects in its stores, and to enter into partnerships with other institutions to improve the services it offers to its community. The new Harappan Gallery was reinstalled through a collaboration between the National Museum and the Archaeological Survey of India, and both deserve congratulations for their work. In the months to come, I look forward to reviewing other refurbished galleries as well.

This newsletter comes to you from Hyderabad where, in the first week of January, I attended a seminar and workshop on "Embroidery: Creativity and Tradition" at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT). Organized by the Crafts Council of India (CCI), it covered the Asia Pacific Region and had representatives from twelve countries. On the occasion, the UNESCO crafts award 2001 for the Asia Pacific region for excellence in craftsmanship was also conferred, along with an exhibition of all the entries. This year the award was shared between Korea and India. The Indian recipient was Basheer Ahmed Jaan, a jamawar shawl embroiderer from Kashmir, who had earlier said that there was no honour and respect left for craftspeople in the state because of the political turmoil there. Hopefully this award will show him that all is not lost.

"Craft is the largest employer in India after agriculture," stated Ashok Chatterjee, President of CCI, at the inauguration to the seminar. At the same time he said that it is vital for us to reflect on the survival of craft, not as museum pieces but as a dynamic part of life that is essential to the future. Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, well-known for his promotion of hi-tech, reiterated Chatterjee's stance by saying that his government has not forgotten traditional skills in its pursuance of high technology. This is evident from the fact that a huge crafts village, Shilparamam, has come up alongside Hi-tech City in Hyderabad.

The seminar began with a presentation by Jagdish Mittal, who

1
Evam Piljain Wiedermann, on the right, and another Toda woman, both wearing the traditional Toda garment, *puhur puthukuli*. Photograph: Monisha Ahmed.



looked at the history of embroidery in India citing a Jain embroidered piece from the 15th century as one of the earliest surviving examples. Ari, kantha, phulkari, toda, kasuti, chikankari, and sujani were some of the Indian embroidery traditions that were covered in the papers presented. Amongst the traditions from the Asia Pacific region, presentations covered embroidery from Swat and Sindh in Pakistan to Souzani in Central Asia, as well as those in Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand. The definition of embroidery went beyond threadwork and Edric Ong, a designer from Malaysia, described the beadwork of Sarawak. Also included were presentations on trade embroidery, and Joanne Eicher spoke about how the Kalabari of the Rivers State in Nigeria use gold-embroidered velvet from India.

Apart from presentations on the different embroidery traditions, the seminar also raised several questions and issues. "Textiles are a non-verbal language that speak to us at many levels," said Jasleen Dhamija in the keynote address. In the present context they tell us about the empowerment of women, as several women use their skill at embroidery to attain a better standard of living (figure 1).¹ As a Lambadi embroiderer from Andhra Pradesh poignantly put it, "You call it a handicraft, back home we never called it anything until it brought us money."

Discussions during the seminar also looked at the transmission of various embroidery traditions so that they are not lost. In some ways the embroidery workshop, held alongside the seminar, was a platform for this transmission. It became an arena in which participants of the seminar, mainly the crafts people, and students of NIFT could learn various embroidery stitches from each other. Other issues raised during the discussions looked at the



commercialization of embroidery and its use by haute-couture designers. Still further questions concerned the market for replicas and reproductions (figure 2).² If the sales at the crafts bazaar arranged alongside the seminar were anything to go by, the future of embroidered handicrafts at least in India is assured. Long after the seminar was over the stalls, despite their efforts to pack up, continued to be thronged by customers.

Hyderabad has a new museum. Tucked away in the bylanes of the old city is the Purani Haveli, home to the Nizams since the 1750s when the second Nizam made Hyderabad the state capital and acquired the palace. Today, it houses the Durru Shehver School and H.E.H. The Nizam's Museum (see Museum News, Hyderabad, page 83, in this issue). Opened in February 2000, the museum was conceived by the seventh Nizam's grandson, Prince Muffakham Jah. The place has an old-world charm to it with its aged retainers, who once served the Nizam, now working as guards and guides.

2

A recreated Chamba rumal, this is part of a revival project of the Delhi Crafts Council. Photograph: Monisha Ahmed.

The museum is divided into two parts. The first, into which one enters, is the Wardrobe Hall of the sixth Nizam. This consists of a long corridor lined on either side with teakwood cupboards and changing rooms. Some of the wardrobe doors remain open giving you a glimpse of a brocade shalwar, a white chikankari kurta he would have worn as an undergarment, and a silk sari belonging to one of his wives. Above this row of cupboards is a second tier with glass display cases and cabinets in which the Nizam's hats, turbans, shoes, and other accessories are neatly arranged. Bhaskar Rao, director of the museum, says it is the longest wardrobe in the world measuring over 73 metres in length. Situated on the second floor of the Purani Haveli, the Nizam would reach his wardrobe by means of a manually operated wooden and rope lift. Designed 120 years ago, by R. Way Good Engineers in London, the lift is probably the only one of its kind in India that is still in working condition. Though the wardrobe itself is testimony to the opulence that must have once existed as it is said that the Nizam never repeated his clothes, today the contents appear scant and meagre. Unfortunately, over the years, some of the Nizam's possessions have disintegrated or been stolen.

The second part of the museum contains the contents of what is known as the Jubilee Pavilion. This is a fascinating collection of gifts presented to the seventh and last Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan, on the occasion of his silver jubilee celebrations in 1937. The items presented were mainly from public bodies and associations, landowners, labour unions, different religious groups, government departments, and distinguished individuals from India and abroad. Amongst the gifts are gold-embroidered pieces from the Quran, jewel-encrusted walking sticks, gold and

ivory or silver trowels with which the foundation stones for many important buildings in Hyderabad were laid, as well as silver models of the proposed buildings. The centrepiece of the exhibits is the throne on which the Nizam sat during the jubilee celebrations (see page 84, figure 2), as well as a gold model of the Jubilee Pavilion that was built specially for the occasion. The contents of the museum, housed in the haveli's guestrooms, mark

3
Jagdish Mittal showing participants of the embroidery seminar the 15th-century Jain embroidered piece which he says is one of the earliest surviving examples of embroidery in India. Photograph: Monisha Ahmed.



an important period in the history of the reign of the nizams. They also mark the end of their rule, as soon after this Hyderabad became part of independent India. The labelling of exhibits, a rarity in most Indian museums, is detailed and informative. For this the present director must be congratulated. He has also included several panels documenting the nizams' reign in Hyderabad, especially relating events in the life of the seventh Nizam. At present Bhaskar Rao is working on a catalogue of the museum's collections; he also hopes to expand the museum and hold temporary exhibitions on select themes on the nizams and their contributions to the city of Hyderabad.

Probably the highlight of my trip was a glimpse into the contents of Jagdish Mittal's celebrated collection of Indian art and craft. A visit to his home was specially organized for the participants of the seminar. Though miniature paintings form the core of his collection, Mittal also has some very fine and rare examples representative of different traditions of Indian textiles. Amongst these is the 15th-century Jain embroidered panel, of which he had spoken in his lecture (figure 3). Others include a long painted panel from Aurangzeb's tents, gold-worked kalamkari pieces, finely woven Kashmiri shawls, gold-embroidered ikat saris, and exquisite baluchari saris. In 1976, Mittal and his wife set up a public charitable trust, the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art. Unfortunately, this museum does not have a building and the only way the collection can be viewed is at the Mittals' home, by prior appointment. Hopefully the present Andhra government will abide by their commitment to promote the arts along with technology, and support the building of the museum. Then Hyderabad will have another new museum for us to look forward to.

NOTES

1 Evam Piljain Wiedermann, a Toda from the Nilgiri Hills in Karnataka, has for the last 45 years been fighting against the injustices faced by her community, the main one being the encroachment of their land by wealthy tea-plantation owners. She has also helped revive Toda embroidery, a dying art, and find a market for these textiles made by women. The traditional Toda garment, *puhur puthukuli*, is made from a rough cotton fabric woven especially for the Todas by weavers who live in the Nilgiris, upon which embroidery has been done using cotton thread. The colours mainly used are red, black, and blue. The only stitch used is the darning stitch, which is done from the reverse side of the fabric. The Todas wear the fabric with the rough, or reverse, side of the embroidery facing outwards.

2 The Chamba rumal originated in the erstwhile princely hill states of Chamba, Kangra, and Basohli, now in Himachal Pradesh. The rumals were embroidered in silk by upper-class women, on drawings on cotton made by miniature painters. The pieces, which were usually done in a square format, were used to cover gifts and offerings.

Set against the gorgeous backdrop of the Purani Haveli, walking distance from Charminar, the centre of Hyderabad, His Exalted Highness (H.E.H.) The Nizam's Museum is a Mecca for art and culture, redolent with history and Proustian ambience (figure 1). Ever since the days when entrepreneurs arrived in the early 1700s, to call on the grandees serving the House of Asaf Jah (1724–1948), visitors have been captivated by the nizams of Hyderabad.

First the entrepreneurs, as well as ferenghi, came to Hyderabad for the lucrative trade. Drawn by the perfect climate, legendary gardens, and inviting lifestyle, they returned to build splendid havelis and palaces (*deoris*). H.E.H. Nizam VII, Mir Osman Ali Khan changed Hyderabad for good. The greatest patron of architecture in 20th-century Hyderabad, he commissioned,

constructed, and completed monumental architecture for the public within a brief span of 25 years (1911–36). The Nizam's Museum is invaluable for an understanding of his extraordinary achievements. Visitors are enlightened by H.E.H.'s tremendous civic pride. He enhanced the quality of life for all citizens. He never built a palace; he never hunted. People mattered. A selection of what some individuals and government departments presented to Nizam VII on his silver jubilee is on view. Most of the objects displayed are decorative (figure 3). Even so, these are remarkable works of art. Sadly, no such objects are being created today. Among several high-calibre works found in the museum are papier mache from Baigunpally; painted wooden crafts from Nirmal; threadlike silver objects from Karimnagar; and bidriware.

Architecture is the key to the allure and charm of Hyderabad. The marvellous fact about Nizam VII is that each architectural complex designed for the public remains in use to the present. Just think of his encyclopaedic range of humanism: the public gardens, and within these the Legislative Assembly, State Museum, Ajanta Pavilion, Jubilee Pavilion; the Hyderabad Public School near Begumpet airport; midway to the old city, Moazzam Jahi market. Within a radius of one mile of Purani Haveli, Nizam VII built stupendous buildings: Osmania Hospital; High Court; City College; Unani Hospital; Asafia State Library. In a magnificent tour de force, his architects blended Deccani Buddhist-Hindu-Muslim architectural elements at Osmania University. Astute patriot, scholar-statesman C. Rajagopalachari praised Osmania



1
General view of the Nizam's Museum, Hyderabad. Photograph: Monisha Ahmed.

University for being the first to use an Indian language (Urdu) as the medium of instruction. Hundreds of landscaped acres at Osmania University create an idyllic setting conducive to learning. Beyond Hyderabad's municipal limits are Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar, manmade reservoirs stretching all the way to the horizon. Sir Visveshwarayya, pre-eminent engineer, trained some of Nizam VII's formidable engineers, each Hyderabad-born, such as Nawab Ali

Nawaz Jung, Nawab Zain Yar Jung, Syed Ali Raza, among others. Dams and manmade lakes like Nizam Sagar, and Ali Sagar contributed to agriculture and engined the infrastructure. For the weary and weekenders, H.E.H. had spacious bungalows constructed at virtually all these reservoirs. Merchant-Ivory captured pleasure in a palace and leisure by a manmade lake in their film *Heat and Dust* shot on location at Purani Haveli and Umda Sagar.



2
Gold-burnished wooden throne used for the 1937 silver jubilee of the seventh Nizam. Photograph: Shehbaz H. Safrani.



3
Silver filigree elephant with mahout. Karimagar, early 20th century. Photograph: Shehbaz H. Safrani.

Like Bernini, who transformed Rome to Baroque grandeur, Mir Osman Ali Khan created such civic splendour that the magnificent backdrop of Hyderabad is an architectural style called "Osmania". It stood tall and in place by 1937. Exhibited in an entire gallery of the museum are architectural models of many buildings he built. Meticulously constructed to scale, executed in silver, and made in India for his silver jubilee, these models are the soul of this museum.

Featured in another gallery is the splendid throne of H.E.H. (figure 2). Vying for attention in the same gallery are memorabilia, arms and armour, gifts from the Sikh, Christian, Dalit, and Parsi communities, as well as philately, paper currency, coins of his reign, and the flag of the house of Asaf Jah.

In a third gallery, assigned for temporary exhibitions, I curated the first show: "Wondrous Words: Islamic Calligraphy in the Collection of H.E.H. Nizam VII". Neither orthodox nor conservative, the pious Nizam VII loved composing poems. On view are selections of his poetry, Qurans, and two large fragments from the drapery over the Kaaba, presented by King Saud.

I was honoured to have served to upgrade and design the Nizam's Museum, to which Prince Muffakham Jah provided the final touches. He had huge banners suspended from the high ceilings. Gold-embroidered on black velvet is a single Urdu letter (pronounced "Ayn") for "O" designating his paternal grandfather, Mir Osman Ali Khan.

Elsewhere is an enlarged copy of an official gazette issued by the government of Andhra Pradesh following the death of Nizam VII in 1967, listing his achievements and mourning his loss. The Nizam's Museum at Purani Haveli opened on February 18, 2000. Andhra's dynamic Chief Minister, Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated it in the presence of Her Highness Princess of Berar, Durru Shehvar. Still striking and ramrod straight at 90-plus, the last direct descendant of the Ottomans, the Princess was accompanied by her loyal son, Muffakham Jah. On this joyous occasion, seated next to me was a friend: a brahman scholar, born and educated in Hyderabad, an IAS officer. Reminiscing about Mir Osman Ali Khan, I asked my friend to sum up the seventh and last Nizam to rule Hyderabad. "Genius," he declared.

The much vaunted reopening of the Museum für Indische Kunst in Berlin took place in October 2000, after a closure of two and a half years. Despite its name, the museum is most famous for its Central Asian sculpture and wall paintings, which were collected in the early 20th century on the four so-called Turfan expeditions, roughly the same time as those collected by Aurel Stein, now divided between the British Museum and the National Museum, New Delhi. However, the collection of Indian art comprises important examples of sculpture of all periods, including many rare iconographical types, with important holdings from ancient Gandhara and eastern India (the latter has recently been catalogued by C. Bautze-Picron, *The Art of Eastern*

India in the Collection of the Museum of Indian Art, Berlin, 1998), as well as fine examples of the Indian decorative arts, and Himalayan and Southeast Asian art. Originally part of the Museum of Ethnography, the Museum for Indian Art was founded at the initiative of Herbert Härtel, who was its director from 1963 until 1986. It was moved to its present location at Dahlem in 1971, where the other Asiatic collections are also housed, and from when the old display dated. The reinstallation has taken place under its present director, Marianne Yaldiz.

The plan of the Indian museum wing is rectangular, less than one-third of the space now enclosing a square hall for the display of the Central Asian paintings. The substantial areas around

this central section form the exhibition space for the other objects, including a mezzanine floor at the back. The floors are of a grey stone, specially imported from India, and the walls are painted white and flooded with light, supplied from overhead lights in the suspended ceiling, replacing the earlier display characterized by dark walls and spotlights. The entrance leads to the front gallery where the Indian items are displayed chronologically starting from the Indus Valley culture through the medieval period, either in glass cases or free-standing on pedestals (figure 1). The glass cases contain the smaller objects, which are either placed on small wood blocks painted grey, or directly on the floor of the case or on suspended glass shelves. Rows of tiny



1
Museum für Indische Kunst, Indian sculpture gallery, Gandhara, Gupta, Pala, and Kashmir. Photograph courtesy Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin.

diffused lights illuminate the objects from above while flexible pencil lights pinpoint details from below. The larger sculptures are mounted on open frames, often of clumsy form especially when supporting a disproportionate object like a detached head, and already look somewhat dated. These in turn are set on square pedestals, all painted grey to match the floor, and displayed in rows or individually at a reasonable height for the viewer. In the middle of the gallery is a round open partition around which Gandharan relief sculptures are mounted to give the impression of the drum of a stupa ornamented with scenes from the life of the Buddha. Apart from this device, there is no attempt at an architectural or contextual display in this gallery. Though the intention was clearly to create a cheerful and bright ambience, the bright lighting often has the effect of drowning the objects. The poor choice of "battleship" grey, a rather cold colour, for the pedestals, combined with the grey stone floor, makes for a rather sterile effect, though the mosaic tiling around the Gandhara display creates some relief.

The lighting of the display cases works well with most objects, but those with hard surfaces that reflect the light could not be seen well as was the case with the Pala and Kashmir bronzes, which were also displayed too low, a problem probably already rectified. The selection of Indian sculptures has been rotated, but that of the decorative arts in the next gallery is more or less unchanged, reflecting limited reserves. The Indian miniature paintings displayed at the back are mounted on upright rows of perspex panels, which was not to everyone's taste, while other paintings and manuscripts were more conventionally mounted on the wall or in desk cases. The most successful gallery, much of this due to the intimacy



of a room with a low ceiling, is the mezzanine floor with its collection of Himalayan and Southeast Asian art. Though the quality of the objects does not approach that of the Indian section, it does contain some very fine Central Javanese bronzes. This is accessed by a flight of open stairs at either end.

The bright, spacious Central Asian painting hall replaces the earlier display of a series of dimly lit rooms with dark walls, which was very atmospheric, and closer to the original setting. However, the new display helps better here than in the sculpture gallery insofar as the

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Museum für Indische
Kunst, reconstructed
"Cave of the ring-bearing
doves", Kizil. Photograph
courtesy Museum für
Indische Kunst, Berlin.

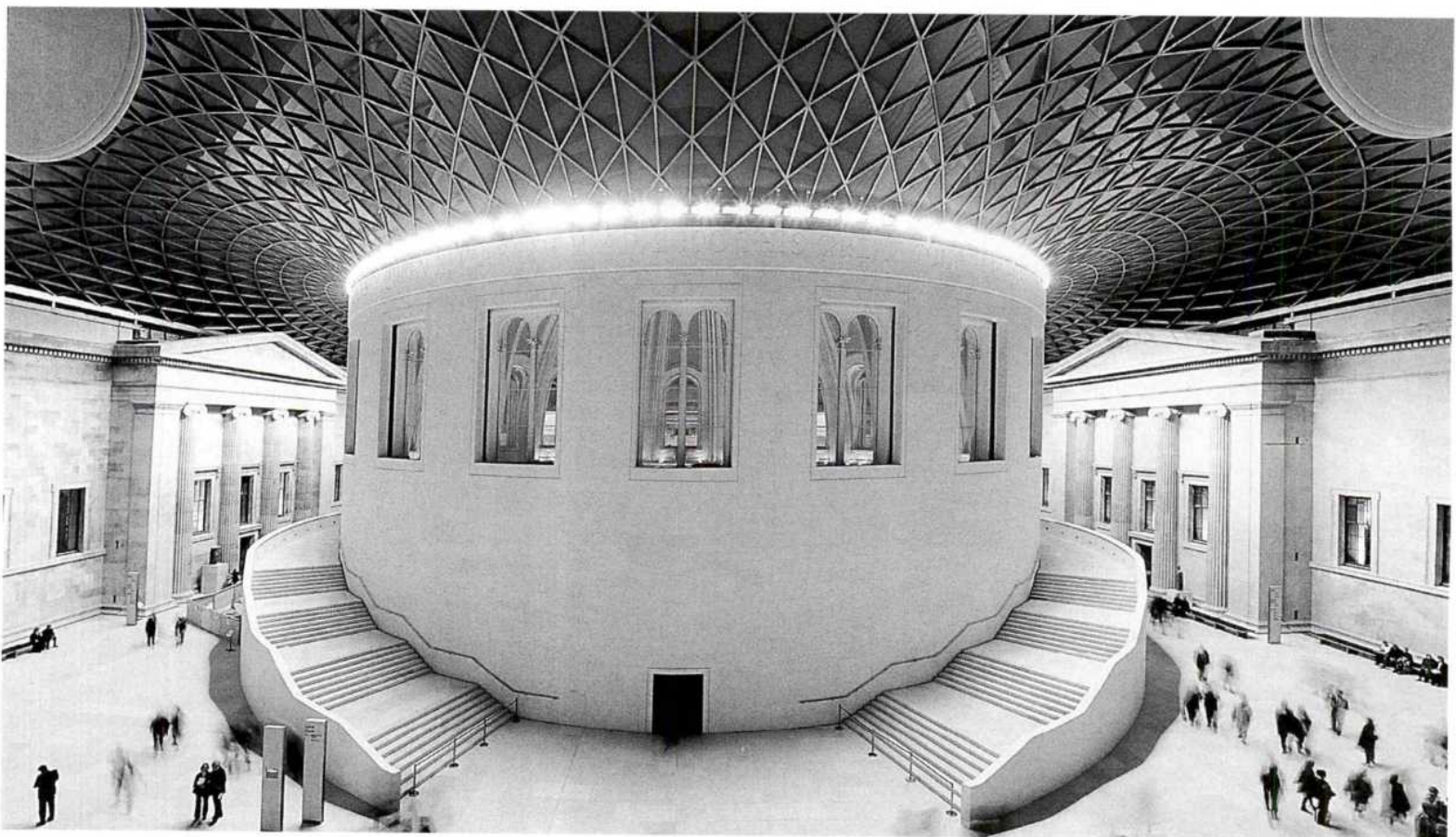
paintings themselves supply colour and warmth. The painted panels are let into the walls of the hall, which can be entered on two sides. In the middle of the hall is a rectangular structure containing the "Cave of the ring-bearing doves", which has been reconstructed according to its original measurements (figure 2). This punctiliousness does great credit to the museum, and the visitor can enter the cave exactly as it was to see the murals placed in their original position. An opening leads to the final outer gallery containing the Central Asian polychromed sculpture, manuscripts, and works of art. This also works fairly well, especially as the objects are not as concentrated as in the Indian gallery.

It is the Indian gallery that is most disappointing. Though the lighting and positioning of the objects is technically very good, the installation seems clinical and unimaginative, and makes no real concessions to the original context of the objects displayed, which the pre-publicity promised. The designer

probably considered a contextual display too risky a venture, as it requires a careful balance, and should not be too obtrusive. However, good models are available, perhaps the most successful being the Nehru Gallery of Indian decorative arts at the V&A Museum in London, which was partly adapted from the exhibition "The Indian Heritage" (discussed by Rosemary Crill in *Marg*, vol. 35, no. 4, 1983). In the end it is all a matter of personal taste, and it is impossible to please everyone. We now await the reopening of the other great collection of South and Southeast Asian art in continental Europe, the Musée Guimet in Paris, which is scheduled for the New Year.

Few mixed feelings were evident in London when the Great Court of the British Museum was finally unveiled to the public to general acclaim in early December. The Great Court lies at the heart of the building and encloses the famous circular Reading Room with its domed ceiling. The main building in neoclassical style, which was completed

by 1850, was the work of the architect Robert Smirk, while the Reading Room, added later (opened 1857), was designed by his brother Sydney. The courtyard area around the Reading Room was slowly invaded by a warren of book storage facilities, while the original South Portico was removed in the 1870s to enlarge the entrance hall, so that the whole original design was soon lost. It was only with the move to the new British Library building in St Pancras that the space could be reclaimed to create Europe's largest enclosed public square. The contract to redesign the central part of the building was awarded to Foster and Partners following an intense competition. Their plan involved reconstructing a new South Portico, restoring the dome of the Reading Room and reinstating its original colours of gold and blue, cladding the walls of its bricked drum with limestone to match the other walls, and creating a monumental staircase on both sides to arrive at the new Joseph Hotung Great Court Gallery, the Court





3
The Great Court of the British Museum looking north towards the Reading Room. Photograph courtesy the British Museum.

4
Detail of the South Portico of the British Museum and the glass ceiling of the Great Court. Photograph courtesy the British Museum, copyright Nigel Young.

Restaurant, and a bridge link to the main museum building (figure 3). The most remarkable achievement is the curved glass circular roof that links the Reading Room with the main building, each triangular pane of glass of different size (figure 4). This was to overcome problems created by the Reading Room being slightly north of centre. Various monumental sculptures are positioned around the Great Court, representative of the collections, such as the famous stone lion of Cnidos, and a Roman stone equestrian figure. As in most major public projects there was a slight hiccup. The South Portico, which should have been constructed of Portland stone, a variegated limestone, was done in the plain cream French limestone instead. The project was remarkably completed on budget (£100 million). Now formally known as the Queen Elizabeth II Great Court, it was officially opened by the Queen, apparently so impressed by the transformation that she did not want to leave.

Asian Art in London (November 9–17) celebrated another successful year

with the participation of 50 dealers, and many public events, including lectures and exhibitions. The V&A organized a small exhibition of Indian bronzes from the 8th to 18th centuries, entitled “Unseen Indian Bronzes”.

Within four months two scholarly conferences were held in the US on related topics, thus indicating a continued and revitalized interest in the artistic and cultural history of northern India and its interactions with Central Asia and Parthian Iran, particularly during the centuries surrounding the turn of the Common Era. The first was a two-day conference called "Kings 'N Things", sponsored by the Caravan Foundation, and held in New York City's Cooper Union on July 25–26, 2000. The second, much more well-publicized and held on a grander scale, was the symposium "On the Cusp of an Era: Art in the Pre-Kushan World", held at and sponsored by the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, in Kansas City, Missouri, November 8–11, 2000.

We may view these two scholarly symposia as being in the tradition of conferences such as the meeting held in 1960 on the date of Kanishka,¹ the Dushanbe conference of 1968,² and, more recently, the conference associated with the Crossroads of Asia exhibition in Cambridge, England,³ and the papers delivered in Vienna in the late 1990s.⁴ The New York and Kansas City conferences not only furthered the dialogue of these illustrious meetings by presenting some of the most recent scholarship in the field, but also expanded it by including more multidisciplinary approaches and covering relevant material from a broader geographical range. Both conferences had an impressive assemblage of leading scholars from

Europe, Asia, and the US who have published extensively in the fields of ancient Indian, Iranian, and Bactrian philology, numismatics, archaeology, epigraphy, and art history, though the New York conference included more junior participants. The monumental efforts of the two conference organizers, Mr Samir Masri of the Caravan Foundation, and Dr Doris Meth Srinivasan, Curator of South Asian Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, produced two meetings of the highest quality at which major contributions were made towards enhancing our understanding of the intriguing and obscure early cultural history of present-day Pakistan, Afghanistan, northern India, and Iran.

The first day of the Kings 'N Things conference emphasized papers on the history, literature, religion, and art of Parthian Iran, while the presentations on the second day focused more on recently discovered documents, coinage, dynastic chronologies, and art of Bactria and Gandhara. The scholars were allowed a great deal of freedom in the length and level of erudition of their presentations, and it seemed that they were encouraged to speak on topics of their own choosing involving aspects of their latest research. Consequently the papers were not necessarily coherently interrelated, and many would be difficult to follow by non-specialists, but each was of great interest, since every paper revealed new information on a special topic of the speaker's expertise.

Without listing and summarizing the content of all the papers, which are planned for publication, several

examples may serve to inform the reader of the type of contributions made at the Kings 'N Things conference. Professor James R. Russell discussed the religious beliefs of the Parthians, as gleaned from a variety of scarce and scattered sources, and the interaction between Zoroastrianism and Mithraism, characterizing the Mithraic cult as being similar to a fraternity, much like the Freemasons. Regional stylistic differences in Parthian sculpture were analysed by Dr Trudi Kawami, who contrasted the Hellenizing art of the Parthian capital of Nisa to the more stylized depictions of the Arsacid kings from sites such as Susa and Bisitun. Professor Nicholas Sims-Williams presented his work on the recently discovered Bactrian documents from pre-Islamic Afghanistan, most of which are personal letters or legal contracts written on leather or cloth, dating from the 4th to 7th centuries CE. They reveal a great deal about the society and melange of religions current in Afghanistan and Central Asia during this period, for they contain elements of Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and cults of local divinities associated with natural sites, such as the Oxus river. The clay sealings used on Bactrian documents were studied by Dr Judith Lerner, and she presented her findings, which revealed a similar cultural eclecticism in both style and subject matter of the images on the seals. Some were based on the portraiture of Roman coinage; some had Hellenistic motifs; others were Sassanian in inspiration, while still others depicted overflowing vases such

A *nagini*, Mathura region,
1st century CE. 159.38 x
58.42 x 31.75 cm. The
Nelson-Atkins Museum of
Art, Kansas City, Missouri
(Purchase: Nelson Trust)
79-21. Photograph:
Gary Sutton.



as those found commonly in Indian art. The six papers dealing with the region of Gandhara in present-day Pakistan were primarily concerned with the pre-Kushan Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian rulers. Professor Richard Salomon noted key evidence from recently discovered Buddhist birch-bark manuscripts and contemporaneous inscriptions, datable to the early 1st century CE, in which the Indo-Scythian kings and satraps were shown to have been generous donors to Buddhist monasteries and to have had closer interactions with Buddhist monks even than their more well-known successors, the Kushans. Dr David W. MacDowall, one of three numismatists present at the meeting, introduced a more precise chronology of the pre-Kushan rulers of the Gondophares dynasty based on his nearly completed study of the silver content in their coins, which steadily decreased with the progression of time.

From the papers presented at the conference, it became clear that it is difficult to track Parthian cultural elements in the literature, coins, and art of Gandhara, even during the pre-Kushan periods when the region was ruled by Indo-Parthian and Indo-Scythian kings and satraps who apparently originated from Parthian Iran. In Gandhara, as Professor Salomon observed, Buddhism became a unifying force that linked the foreign rulers together with the local population into a more cohesive culture. The region of ancient Afghanistan, including Bactria, presents a different picture, for Buddhism apparently did not hold the same dominance as it did south of the Hindukush. The material evidence from Afghanistan and Central Asia suggests a much more eclectic mixture of peoples and religions from Iran and India together with the local population, and Hellenistic and Roman elements continue to be popular without a great

deal of adaptation well into the 4th and 5th centuries CE. The emphasis on Parthian Iran in the conference as a whole was of particular interest, for, in contrast to the Achaemenids, the Sassanians, and of course their Islamic successors, the Parthians have traditionally been little studied. As one of the speakers, Dr C. Maranci, pointed out in her historiographical presentation, the art of the Arsacids, or Parthians, often has been viewed merely as debased or misunderstood versions of earlier Achaemenid art, yet without the innovations credited to the subsequent Sassanians. With dialogues such as these that took place at the Kings 'N Things conference, with numerous experts in various aspects of Parthian, Bactrian, and Gandharan history, language, literature, and art, we draw closer and closer to learning about the interactions among these distinctively multicultural regions of the ancient world.

The symposium in Kansas City, "On the Cusp of an Era: Art of the Pre-Kushan World", spanned four days and was meticulously organized. Each speaker was assigned a topic, so that the twenty-minute presentations were divided among four panels: "Evaluating the Absolute: Chronology of Excavated Pre-Kushan Art", "From Coins to Icons", "Paths and People: Connecting the Pre-Kushan World", and "Collision of Foreign and Indigenous Cultures: Pre-Kushan Art". At the end of each panel, a lengthy open discussion session involving audience members as well as the panelists lent a workshop-like atmosphere to the otherwise formal proceedings. This conference had a more clearly articulated mission than did Kings 'N Things; its aim was to define the nature of pre-Kushan art.

In terms of geography, the inquiry into pre-Kushan art was not limited to the two Indian foci of Mathura and

2

"Miracles of Fire",
Gandhara, 2nd century CE.
46.0 x 28.5 cm. Museum
of Art and Archeology,
University of Missouri-
Columbia (gift of
Dr Samuel Eilenberg)
76.165. Photograph:
S.R. Quintanilla.



Gandhara, but was extended from the central Gangetic plain by Drs S.P. Gupta and Amiteshwar Jha, to the steppes of Central Asia by Dr Kazim Abdullaev and Professor Xinru Liu, and even to the Parthian capital of Nisa by Professor Antonio Invernizzi. In fact, pre-Kushan Mathura was discussed rather little. Dr Herbert Härtel's presentation (pre-recorded) focused on his extensive excavations at Sonkh in Mathura, at which the pre-Kushan levels yielded mainly coins and terracottas. Most of the stone sculptures from Mathura that were discussed actually date to the Kushan Period, such as the already well-published finds from Sonkh and Sanghol, except for unpublished monumental images of snake goddesses from the Mathura region, dated by Dr Srinivasan to the first century CE. She interpreted them as having been set up in a quadripartite outdoor shrine – the subject of a special exhibition at the Nelson-Atkins Museum that aptly accompanied the symposium. Otherwise, most of the papers dealt with the regions of Gandhara and Bactria, with particular emphasis on the legacy of Hellenism and on archaeology. Dr Pierfrancesco Callieri, for example, focused his discussion on the site of Barikot in Swat, which he professed to have been a uniquely Hellenistic urban settlement, possibly founded by the Indo-Greek refugees from the sacking of Ai Khanoum in 145 BCE.

Aside from archaeology and art history, germane issues in numismatics, philology, and the technical evaluation of stone figured prominently. In one particularly interesting presentation, Phyllis Granoff analysed passages in a little-known early version of the *Skanda Purana*, datable to the 7th or 8th century CE – manuscripts of which have recently emerged from Nepal. She assessed how such puranic sources

may be used to explain the lack of Shaiva narrative imagery before the Gupta period and to reinterpret early Shaiva iconography. Professor Gregory Schopen delivered the lengthiest and final paper in the closing plenary session in which he underscored the importance of art in the beautification of monastic establishments for the purpose of attracting lay donations, as gleaned from the Buddhist *Mulasarvastivadin Vinaya* of the 1st or 2nd century CE.

With the convening of more than two dozen leading senior scholars discussing broadly interdisciplinary subjects covering any geographical area that would have been even remotely touched by the Kushans, participants do not seem to have formulated a clear model of pre-Kushan art. Indeed, the dates that would qualify as “pre-Kushan” fluctuate from one region to another according to the movements of the Kushans themselves, unless the *terminus ante quem* is artificially set at the date of the accession of Kanishka – a vexed question that was consciously avoided at this conference. Nevertheless, the symposium was of great value and importance, and when the papers are published in their complete form, the book promises to be a staple in the libraries of historians of Indian art.

Dr Srinivasan closed the symposium by suggesting that there be another pre-Kushan conference in the future. After all, one meeting cannot possibly cover all of the aspects of this most complex of periods. The strength of “On the Cusp of an Era” was in clarifying interregional connections and multicultural elements in Gandhara and Central Asia primarily through the vehicle of archaeology. In a future conference on the art of the pre-Kushan world, scholars might include discussions of Jainism, comparative religions from one region to another,

further analyses of the extensive epigraphical records, new evidence concerning the introduction of the anthropomorphic image of the Buddha, and the stylistic features distinctive to the art of pre-Kushan, versus Kushan, periods. Some of these issues, especially those of religion and styles in art, were more emphasized in the Kings ‘N Things conference, which felicitously complemented On the Cusp of an Era. Both of these scholarly symposia were valuable in many ways, but perhaps most importantly in that they broaden our scope of inquiry, not only in terms of geography, but especially in terms of disciplines. It is encouraging to see so many fine scholars from such diverse fields working together towards the common goal of bringing into focus the still challenging, but now perhaps less obscure, picture of ancient Indo-Iranian and Central Asian cultural history.

NOTES

- 1 Papers published in A.L. Basham, ed., *Papers on the Date of Kanishka Submitted to the Conference on the Date of Kanishka*, Leiden, 1968.
- 2 Papers published in *Central Asia in the Kushan Period*, Moskow, Committee on the Study of the Civilizations of Central Asia of the Commission of the USSR for UNESCO, 1975.
- 3 Papers published in Raymond Allchin, Bridget Allchin, Neil Kreitman, and Elizabeth Errington, eds., *Gandharan Art in Context: East-West Exchanges at the Crossroads of Asia*, New Delhi, 1997.
- 4 Papers published in M. Alram and D. Klimburg-Salter, eds., *Coins, Art, and Chronology: Essays on the Pre-Islamic History of the Indo-Iranian Borderlands*, Vienna, 1999.

***India, An Archaeological History – Palaeolithic Beginnings to Early Historic Foundations*, by Dilip K. Chakrabarti. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999. 374 pages, 56 figures, and 8 maps. Rs 545.**

Any attempt to reconstruct the past primarily on the basis of archaeological data is a daunting task, especially when the history of research spans over two centuries, as is the case with the Indian subcontinent. This publication provides a timely update on the latest research in the field in a manner that clearly outlines the potential for unravelling various facets of the archaeological record. The period of time under consideration begins as far back as two million years ago and ends circa 300 CE, when the structure of Early Historic India was firmly established.

The tabular organization of dates and other information throughout the text enables a quick assessment of the

wealth of material. What sets this book apart from other introductory texts on Indian archaeology is the interesting summary of the development of research on this subject, commencing with the foundation of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. One cannot help contrasting the pioneering zeal of the early antiquarians, many of whom were in government or military service, with the stodgy bureaucracy of the post-Independence era, which is remarkable for the absence of a “national archaeological policy”.

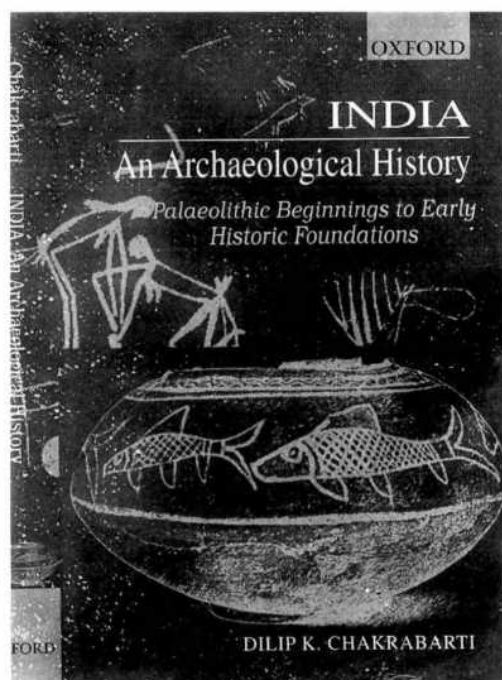
The geographical setting takes into consideration the lines of communication that have, over time, linked the subcontinent with the rest of Asia and Africa. The idea of “interaction zones” is particularly useful in understanding the historical dimensions of state formation.

While the term “community” finds favour in an effort to define the peoples of India in all their diversity, it would have been appropriate to discuss the relevance of the word “tribal”, particularly in the context of the misconceptions of “race” vis-a-vis the “Aryans”, which have been correctly pointed out. Given the author’s stance, there is all the more reason to question the aptness of the section wherein India is equated with Bharatvarsha and concomitantly with Hinduism which, in turn, is defined by the countrywide occurrence of centres of Shakti and Shaivite worship. The implications of such an argument notwithstanding, the feminine or female principle is universal, although its cultural manifestations differ on a regional basis.

Speaking of Bharatvarsha, is the concept limited to the subcontinent or does its geographical scope include the present political reality of India’s island territories? If the latter were true, the relevant archaeological data should have been taken into consideration. If, however, our archipelagos are meant to lie outside the purview of current archaeological analyses, it would be difficult to reconstruct a “past in which all Indians can share”, as stated so eloquently by the author himself.

Chapters 2 and 3, on the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic contexts, provide a useful background of the research undertaken so far, and highlight the need for a global perspective on the knowledge of human evolution in South Asia. One wishes, though, that ambiguous terms such as “Early Palaeolithic” and “Lower Palaeolithic” had been avoided, or the distinction, if any, explained. This also applies to the lower casing of the terms designating the phases of prehistory.

The reference to “factory sites” is somewhat misleading, as lithic waste does not necessarily imply that activities specifically related to tool manufacture were performed at a site. In fact, the very ubiquity of surface scatters of artefacts calls for a greater effort to evolve suitable approaches to their study, the scope for which is as wide as the diverse contexts in which they occur, as also their compositional variation. It is in this light that mention should have been made of the current focus on understanding the processes involved in the formation of the archaeological record.



Questions regarding the use of stone tools are often neglected in pan-Indian accounts of archaeological finds. While Chakrabarti identifies the functions of microliths, a similar description in respect of the Palaeolithic would have completed the picture. And, to set the record straight, glass flakes and chips in the Andamans were knocked off from the bases of bottles for the purposes of shaving and scarification, but were not fashioned into microliths per se, as claimed by the author.

Chapter 4 emphasizes the importance of Baluchistan, especially in light of the numerous prehistoric village sites which, interestingly, lie in areas where cultivation is practised even today. The recent excavation of a village below the ancient city of Harappa, along the Ravi river, is further proof that the urbanism of the Indus civilization had local roots.

The study of this great urban system, in chapter 5, has been rendered all the more exciting due to the ongoing debate on contentious issues, such as the nature of political organization and the "decline" of the civilization. The latter was more a matter of "continuity and transformation" and, as demonstrated by the author, various cultural elements of the Harappans found their way into the developing economies of the subcontinent. What then happened to the Indus script, which is still undeciphered? Can its eventual disappearance, as also that of representations of unicorns and other symbols, be linked to the dissolution of authority? The fact that these queries are still unanswered, despite the extensive excavations that have been undertaken so far, reflects the apparent limitations of the archaeological record.

The following chapter elucidates the regionally distinct features of the "neolithic-chalcolithic" in India. Although

one agrees that it was during this period that the foundations of rural India were laid, the author's claim that the latter resulted from the influence of Harappan agricultural systems on those practised by hunter-gatherers, seems a bit simplistic. When tracing the course of human settlement over a vast area, such generalizations are best avoided; rather the dynamism inherent in the process of adaptation could have been highlighted with a view to shedding some light on the origins of extant modes of shifting or swidden cultivation.

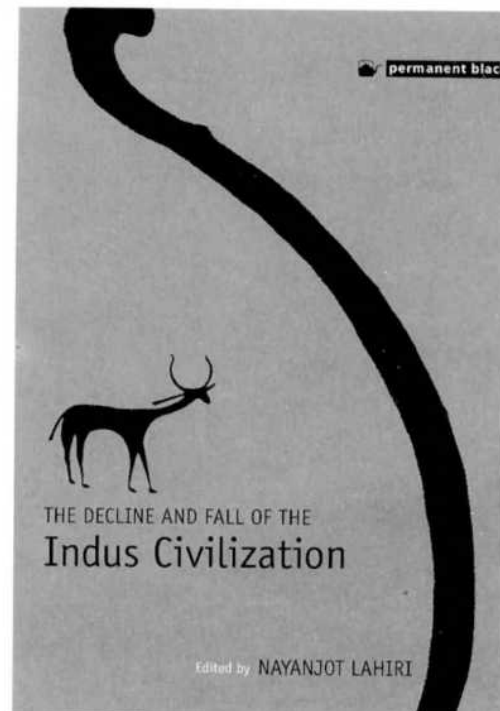
Early Historic India is framed against the background of dynastic history and its political as well as economic correlates. The inscriptional and other evidence is skilfully garnered to illustrate the threads linking diverse archaeological data that constitute a coherent picture. In concluding, the author suggests that areas where urbanism is directly associated with Mauryan rule could have witnessed an earlier beginning.

The discussion of the issues relating to various archaeological problems helps to set the trend for further research. One can only hope that the author's focus on man-land relations stimulates wider interest in the wherewithal of adaptation and the need to analyse the factors that structure the variable nature of archaeological deposits.

This book strikes a fine balance between compilation and interpretation, and is interspersed with thought-provoking comments, which sustain one's interest throughout. These qualities, along with clear illustrations and an exhaustive bibliography (minus the publishers' names, for some reason), should render this text indispensable to any course on South Asian archaeology.

Zarine Cooper

***The Decline and Fall of the Indus Civilization*, edited by Nayanjot Lahiri. Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2000. 410 + vi pages, 10 plates, 22 maps, and 21 drawings. Rs 650.**



The sequence of cause-and-effect is a cornerstone of historical phenomena, and a basis for history writing. The rise or fall of an empire or civilization is often attributed to specific causes: military aggression, a disintegrating economy, geo-political conditions, and so on. Nayanjot Lahiri brings together here a diverse collection of readings from the 1920s – when the Indus valley civilization was first "unearthed" – to the 1990s, by archaeologists, scientists, and historians. Covering a wide spectrum of subjects, the essays are connected by the common theme of the collapse of India's first cities.

The Introduction (1–33) defines and discusses the Harappan phenomenon – its settlement pattern, economy, geographical spread of the civilization, the range of recovered artefacts, and the chronology of the characteristic sites – and critically evaluates the debates on the decline of the Harappan civilization. These debates fall under three themes which form the three parts of the book:

the Indus cities and the Aryans; environmental, geomorphological, and hydrographic changes; and devolution of the Harappan city civilization in the form of the socio-economic developments that emerged from the ruins of the civilization.

Part I (35–138) consists of ten essays which present both sides of the debate on the role of the Aryans in the demise of the Harappan cities. Ramaprasad Chanda and Gordon Childe, writing separately in 1926, explore the contacts between the Indus people and the Aryans and conclude that the former failed to survive the shock of the invasion of the latter. This argument is carried forward by R.E.M. Wheeler's article (1946) which presents the excavated remains of a cemetery in Harappa as evidence of the massacre by the Aryan raiders. This theory of carnage is disputed by P.V. Kane (1953), A.D. Pusalkar (1950), and George F. Dales (1964). B.B. Lal (1997) brings the Vedic and Harappa cultures chronologically closer and discounts the possibility that the entry of Aryan invaders was as late as the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE. Kenneth Kennedy (1995) and Edmund Leach (1990) present the anthropological argument, search for an Aryan presence in northwestern India during and after the Harappan decline, and question the validity of the theory of an Aryan aggression on the Harappans.

Part II (139–263) presents debates on the role of nature in the collapse of the civilization at various Indus sites. E.J.H. Mackay (1937, 1943) writes on the possibility of the erratic Indus flooding Chanhu-daro and Mohenjodaro. S.R. Rao (1979) brings archaeological evidence to bear on the floods of the Bhogara and Sabarmati rivers in Lothal. M.R. Sahnii (1956) explains the floods which cut short the Indus civilization as the outcome of tectonic changes.

Objecting to this theory of drastic geomorphological occurrences in the lower Indus plain, H.T. Lambrick (1967) outlines his explanation of a dramatic change in the course of the Indus as the cause of the ruin of Mohenjodaro. Rafique Mughal (1992) emphasizes the hydrographic factors which influenced the life of the Indus civilization and were the major cause of its decline in Cholistan. Robert Raikes (1969) favours the hypothesis of a sudden diversion of the Ghaggar into the Ganga as the reason for the abandonment of Kalibangan. Yash Pal et al. (1981) postulate the drying up of the Ghaggar channel consequent to the westward movement of the Satluj. Y. Enzel et al. (1999) study sedimentation in Lunkaranser lake in the Thar desert to show that the drying up of the lake by 3500 BCE coincided with a period of intense dune destabilization. On the basis of archaeological evidence, V.N. Mishra (1984) points to climate as a factor. Walter Fairervis (1967) offers an expansive analysis of a possible disequilibrium between urban demand and the carrying capacity of land.

Part III (265–390) offers arguments on the devolution of the Indus civilization in later times. Unlike Parts I and II, it is concerned not so much with the forces behind the disintegration of the civilization, as with the extension of the Harappan example in the post-mature Harappan phase. Dilip Chakrabarti (1995) presents archaeological data to show the reality of a late Harappan phase that followed, and had devolved from, the mature Harappan. Stuart Piggott (1961) believes that the Harappan example endured in both religious and political spheres. S.R. Rao's (1962–63) excavations at Rangpur and other sites in Gujarat point towards strong continuities between the mature Harappan tradition and the later

Chalcolithic cultures. A. Ghosh rejects the theory of a survival of the Harappan culture in the historical urbanism in Rangpur upper Ganga-Yamuna doab. He discusses the seven cultural stages through which the settlement at Dholavira devolved, marked by abandonment and resettlement. Kuldeep Bhan studies the excavated late Harappan sites in western Rajasthan. The agricultural practices and tools are observed by Jean-Francois (1985) to show the continuity of change in the north Kachi plain beginning of the second millennium BCE. In his study of the patterns of problems in the history of crop production Dilip Chakrabarti (1988) traces multicropping to Harappan times. H. Fujiwara et al. (1992) analysed samples, burnt bricks, and pottery at Harappa, and conclude that products of rice, finger millet or rice species of wild grass were produced at Harappa. In her own contribution to the book, Nayanjot Lahiri discusses the distribution of raw materials at various Harappan sites, and traces the routes which acted as channels for movement of these resources.

The Indus – or more correctly Harappan – civilization has passed through the decades of its discovery and rediscovery several interesting insights into India's first cities. A valuable collection of readings is clear of the rather over-emphasized aspects of Harappan life. The essays interspersed with black and white photographs from various line drawings, and maps, amplify the editor's stated purpose of providing a telescopic view of the literature pertaining to questions on the origin of the civilization, and the cultural (or continuity) after its mature

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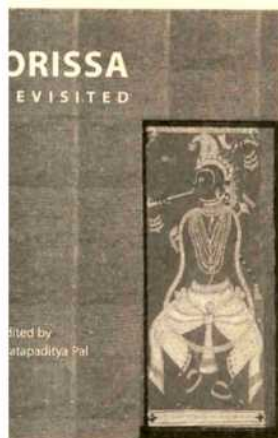
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Edited by Pratapaditya Pal
pp. 180

The artistic traditions of Orissa are among the oldest and richest in the subcontinent. This volume provides a wide-ranging view of Orissa's art: its prehistory; the Buddhist heritage; temple architecture, sculpture, and conservation; Odissi dance; traditional and modern painting; and tribal cultural expressions.



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RECENT BOOKS



2000: Reflections on the Arts in India

Fifteen scholars and practitioners – each an expert in his or her field – assess the current state of art in India. This richly illustrated volume covers archaeology, museums, tribal and folk art, textiles, contemporary art, architecture, urban planning, Hindustani music, dance, theatre, cinema, and television. It also includes a tribute to *Marg*'s founder-editor Mulk Raj Anand, who turned 95 in 2000.

Edited by Pratapaditya Pal
pp. 180

Twentieth-Century Indian Sculpture: The Last Two Decades

In the 1980s and '90s Indian sculpture was unusually productive of new ideas, new idioms, expressed in a radically wide variety of materials and mediums, and these are considered in this volume. The first section has essays on trends in mainstream sculpture, while section II critically views alternative practices, and present-day public sculpture in many states of India. The final section features the works of twenty-seven sculptors with excerpts from the writings of art critics or statements by the artists.

Edited by Shivaji K. Panikkar
pp. 160



The Arts of Kutch

The former princely state of Kutch in northwestern Gujarat has a long history of art patronage. This volume covers the medieval temple and mosque architecture, the Aina Mahal and Prag Mahal which are museums today, painting, and the rich craft traditions of wood carving, textiles and embroideries, and silver work.

Edited by Christopher W. London
pp. 148



REVISED EDITION, 1997 REPRINT, 2000 Bharata Natyam

This book captures the rhythms and beauty of a classical dance-form. With contributions from pioneers, the volume includes essays on Bharata Natyam's history and traditions, dance notation, dance-drama forms, and profiles of exponents — legendary and contemporary. The work has been in constant demand since its first publication in 1979 and has been expanded and updated for this new edition.

Edited by Sunil Kothari, with contributions from Mulk Raj Anand, Rukmini Devi, Padma Subrahmanyam and P. Sambhamurthy
pp. 236



GANESH the benevolent



REPRINT, 2001 Ganesh the benevolent

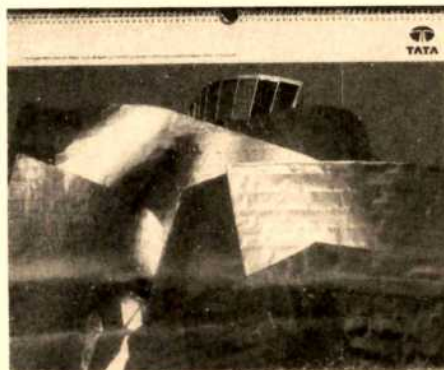
A familiar, well-loved figure in the art and religion of Asia, the elephant-headed Ganesh is universally revered as the god of auspicious beginnings.

The present authoritatively researched volume attempts to collate existing reference material on the subject, as also offer valuable original insights into various aspects of Ganesh in Hindu, Tantric, Jain, and Buddhist traditions in India, and Southeast and East Asia.

Edited by Pratapaditya Pal
pp. 168

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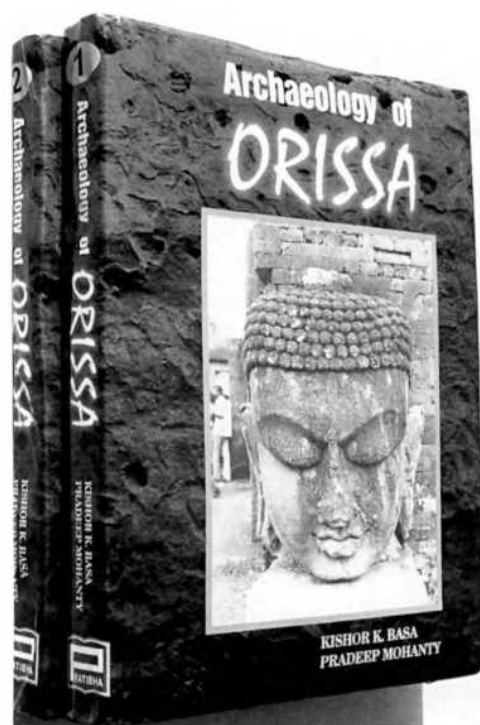
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Archaeology of Orissa, 2 volumes,
 edited by K.K. Basa and Pradeep
 Mohanty. Pratibha Prakashan, New
 Delhi, 2000. 700 pages. Rs 2500.



This set of two volumes on the archaeology of Orissa is noteworthy since it covers a range of archaeological subjects from geomorphology to prehistory, ceramics, historical archaeology, as well as a review of excavations. Orissa comprises uplands, coastal regions, and deltaic plains giving us a range of geomorphological settings for archaeological material.

Archaeology in Orissa originated in 1825 with the discovery of the Sun temple of Konark and Jagannath temple at Puri. Thus the study of archaeology in Orissa is nearly two centuries old. In this period epigraphy, art and sculpture, numismatics, conservation, prehistory have all been covered. A few Orissan archaeologists have sketched out the historiography of archaeology in Orissa and new archaeology has also made advances. A number of contributions in this set of volumes may be described as area studies such as that on the prehistory of Mayurbhanj. Each of these

area studies is replete with tabular representation of data finds and line drawings. There is not the space here to go into a detailed discussion of the data contents of each article, so here is a broad overview.

Pradeep Mohanty's chapter on the Mesolithic culture and ethnography of Keonjhar district is probably one of the finest. Ethnoarchaeological studies on the Mesolithic period are not easy to carry out and the author must be credited for correlating lithics with ethnography. The article by Siba Charan Nanda complements the data presented by Mohanty.

Coming to coastal Orissa, Daitari Sahoo studies the prehistory of Jajpur district and a number of interesting data finds are presented. R.N. Dash explores the Neolithic culture of Orissa using the typo-technological method and Pradeep K. Behera goes a step further by putting his finds in a settlement system perspective for Bonaigarh. There are some further studies on the Neolithic finds in other zones of Orissa.

The data might have been better categorized according to geomorphology – upland, coastal, and deltaic regions – rather than chronologically, since often lithic-period survey data are juxtaposed with later period excavated data causing some confusion.

The discussion in Volume 1 culminates with Chalcolithic findings in various regions of Orissa such as Kanjipani, Sankarjang, and Gopalpur.

Volume 2 is dedicated to Historic-period data analysis based on literary sources, ceramics, excavated remains, and such other sources as are available. Bhairabi Prashad Sahu briefly discusses Orissan empires and social structure. In other chapters sites such as Lalitagiri, Barabati fort, port sites, forts, and the rock art of Orissa are dealt with at length.

There is a fine article on Manikapatana, an ancient and medieval port. Explorations by Debaraj Pradhan, Pradeep Mohanty, and Jitu Mishra have brought to light several Iron Age sites in coastal Orissa. The authors state that the east coast of Orissa was on the maritime map of India well before the time of the Mauryas. These networks were dominated by trading groups owing allegiance to Buddhism and it was through these channels that Buddhist ideology spread to Southeast Asia (H.P. Ray, *The Winds of Change: Buddhism and Maritime Links in Early Historic South Asia*, OUP, Delhi, 1994). The site was subjected to limited excavation in 1989–90 and 1992–93 which yielded different types of materials, in which various types of pottery predominated. Some of these are rouletted ware, knobbed ware, moulded ware, decorated ware, stamped ware, kaoline ware, celadon, and porcelain ware. Other finds include coins, terracotta beads and figures.

Another interesting piece in Volume 2 is "Radhanagar: Early Historic Buddhism, Urban Structure, and Trade" by Jitu Mishra. Radhanagar in coastal Orissa is essentially an Early Historic city in ruins with a large number of Buddhist settlements. The author finds elements present at Radhanagar comparable with the elements of urbanization proposed in the *Arthashastra*. The site is a fortified settlement. Mishra has essentially carried out a surface survey to collect materials which he presents and analyses in the second half of the paper. The material is divisible into ceramics (plain and decorated), beads, coins, faunal remains, as well as Buddhist remains. After taking stock of the material finds, Mishra attempts an analysis regarding state formation at Radhanagar. This has so far been a little known site and Mishra's contribution is therefore of value.

Contributors

K.K. Basa and K.S. Behera write about the maritime archaeology of Orissa. They discuss several surveys carried out around bays and harbours which uncovered different types of materials. They also consult literary sources regarding the maritime trade of Orissa. There is a sizeable discussion on boat-making as well.

Sadasiba Pradhan writes about the rock art of Orissa from the earliest finds made by K.P. Jaiswal to his own recent ones. He includes the distribution of rock art sites and some line drawings, and makes some analytical comments regarding rock art in Orissa.

Harish Prusty, P. Mohanty, and Jitu Mishra write on Dantapura, the capital of ancient Kalinga. This is a more indologically oriented article. Several literary sources are consulted and their implications analysed. They conclude that present-day Radhanagar may be identified as ancient Dantapura, although more research is required on this subject.

Finally, V.D. Gogte writes on the scientific study of ancient pottery from Orissa. This seems a very large area to survey; however, it becomes clear that he has chosen just a few sites from which samples are analysed. He uses the XRD analysis method to determine the mineral content of clays collected from the sites of pottery finds, as well as that of the pottery itself. The mineral contents are compared in order to classify the pottery into local and imported.

These are excellent and comprehensive volumes on the subject. The editors, publishers, and the several funding agencies who have backed the studies are to be lauded.

Ajay Pratap

Thomas Eugene Donaldson has spent the last 30 years teaching Asian art history at Cleveland State University, Ohio, where he is Professor. In addition to 50 articles on the art of Orissa in scholarly works, his publications include the 3-volume *Hindu Temple Art of Orissa*; *Kamadeva's Pleasure Garden: Orissa* (1987); and *The Iconography of Vaisnava Images in Orissa* (2000).

Gopal C. Chauley is Superintending Archaeologist of Excavation Branch III of the ASI, Patna. In over 30 years with the ASI, he has reorganized the Old Goa Museum, organized the Archaeological Museum in Lothal, and been involved with the preservation of the Jagannath temple at Puri, and other monuments in Orissa and Chattisgarh, and most recently while based in Guwahati he took up the conservation of monuments in the northeastern region.

Sonya Rhie Quintanilla received her PhD in Indian art from Harvard University in 1999, and she is currently Lecturer in the history of South Asian art at the University of California, Irvine.

Subhash Parihar specializes in the Muslim architecture of northwestern India. He has contributed several articles to *Marg*, and to international journals.

Zarine Cooper has worked extensively on the archaeology of Bastar and the Andaman Islands. Her most recent publication is *Bastar Folk Art: Shrines, Figurines and Memorials* (1999).

Ajay Pratap has MPhil and PhD degrees in Archaeology from Cambridge University. Based in Patna, he is associated with several NGOs and has published widely in journals and magazines.

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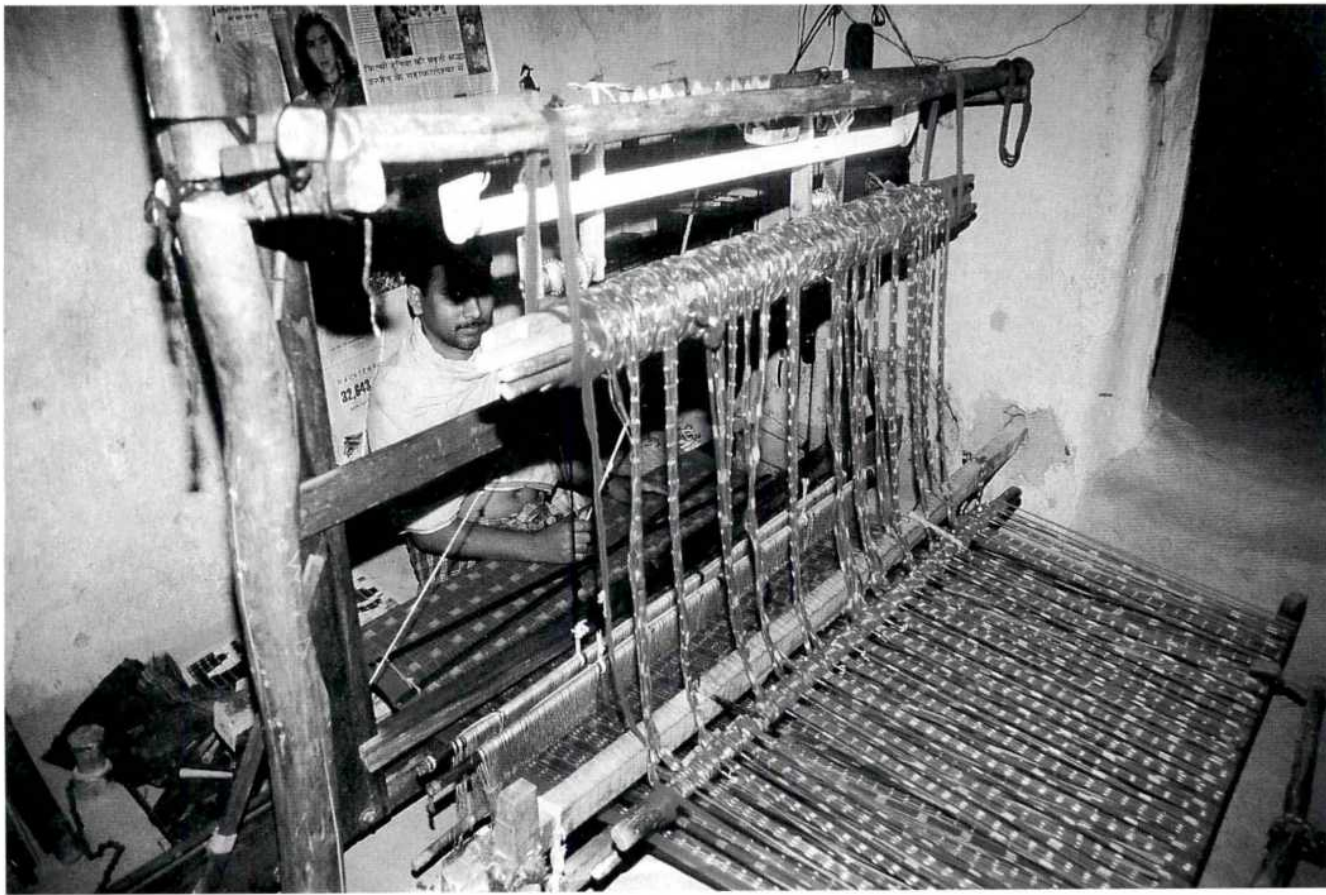
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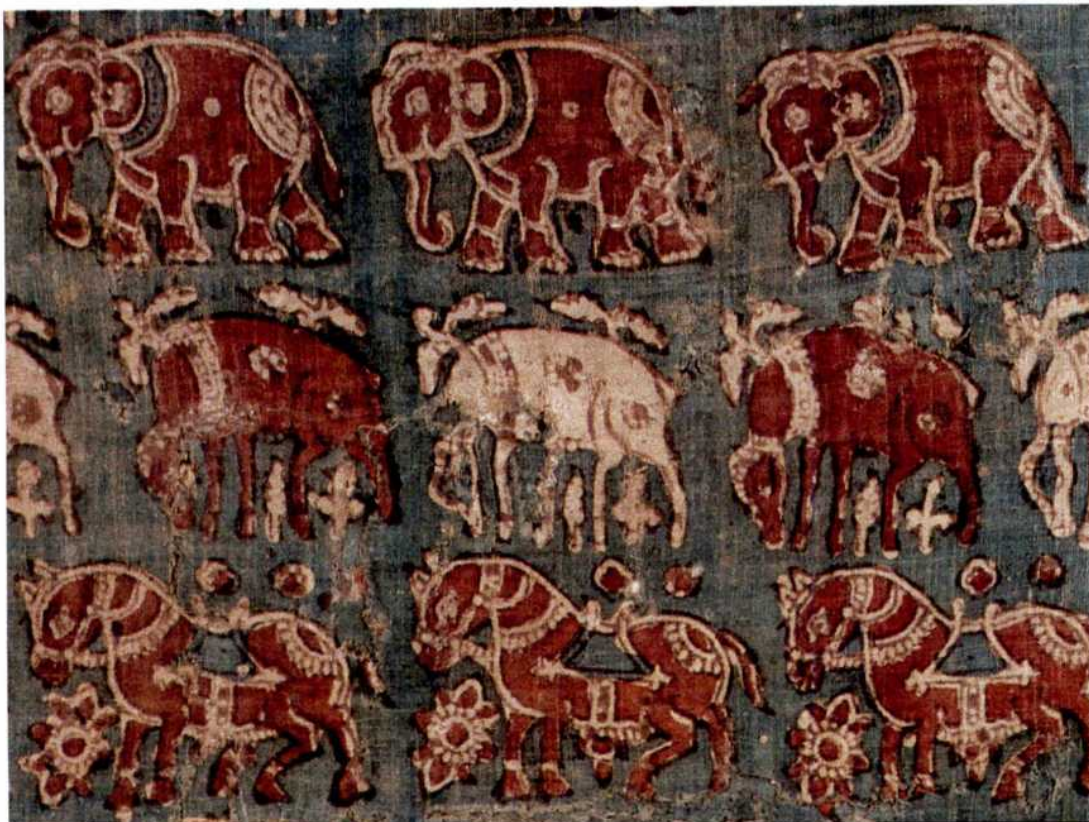
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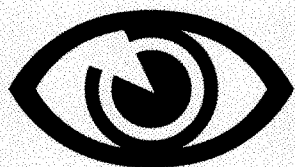
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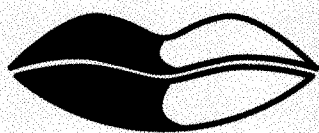
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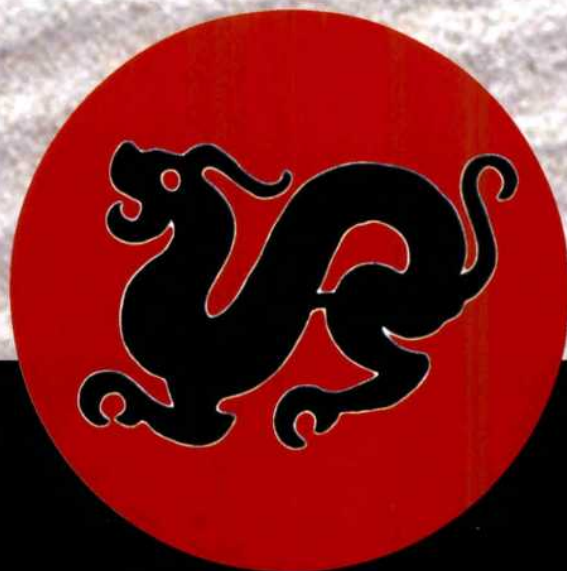


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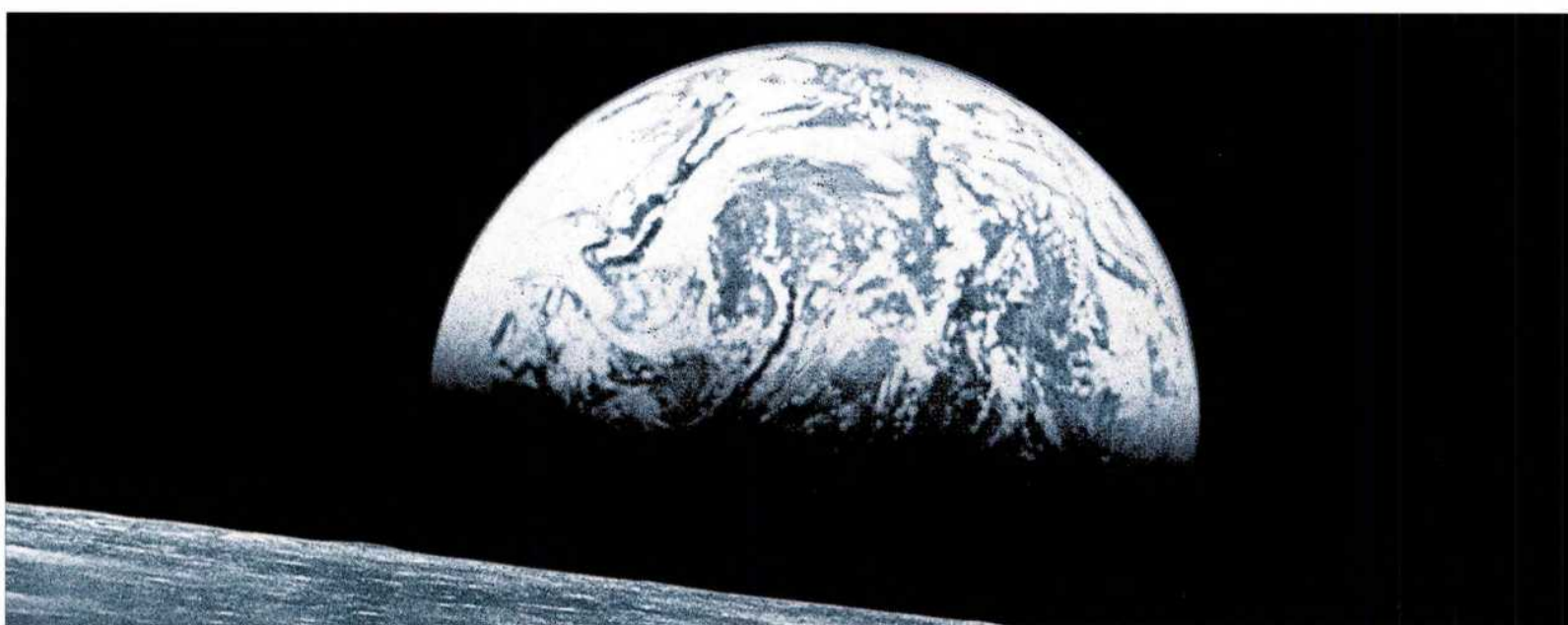
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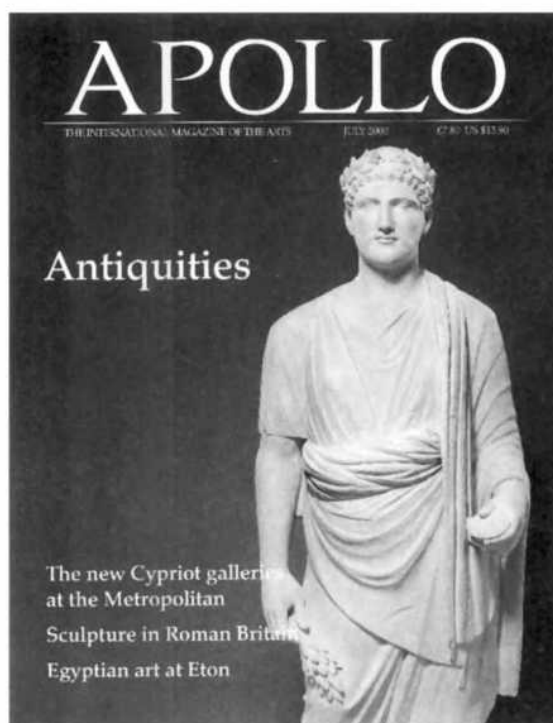
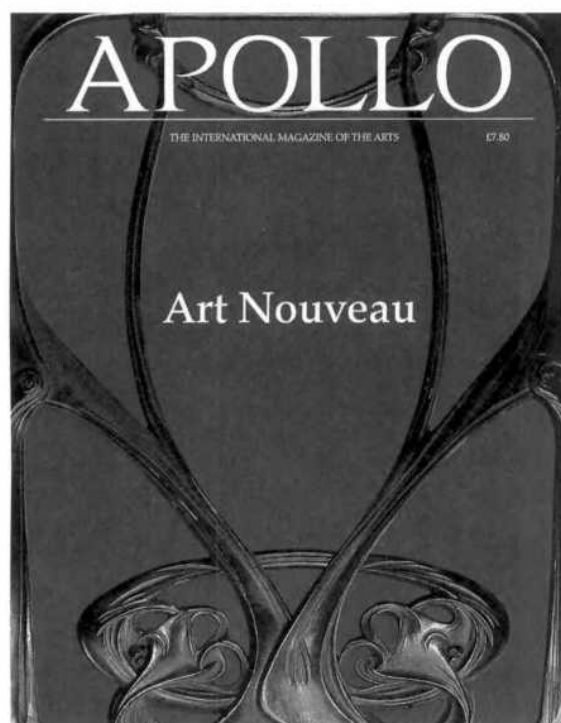
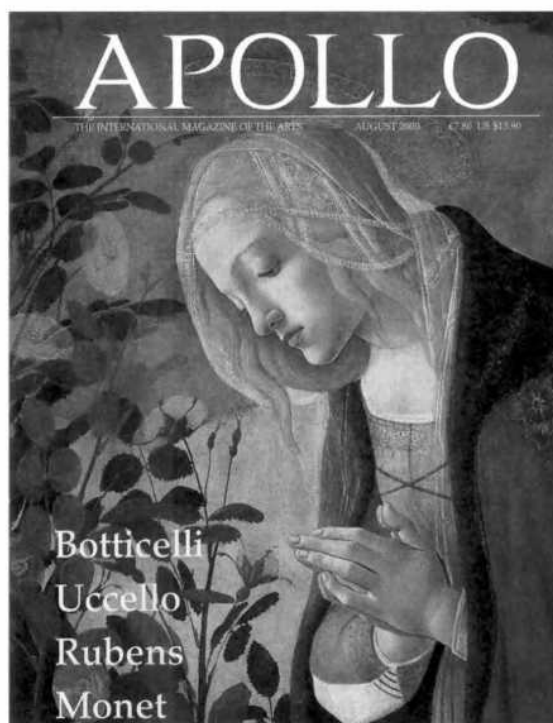
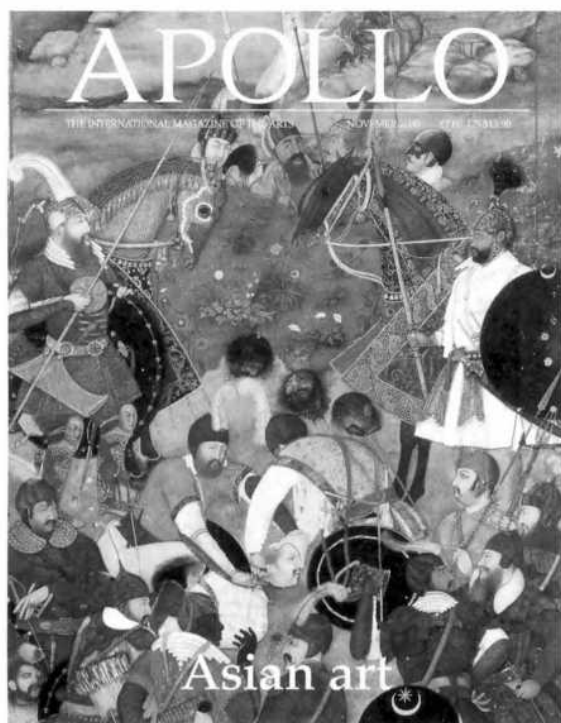
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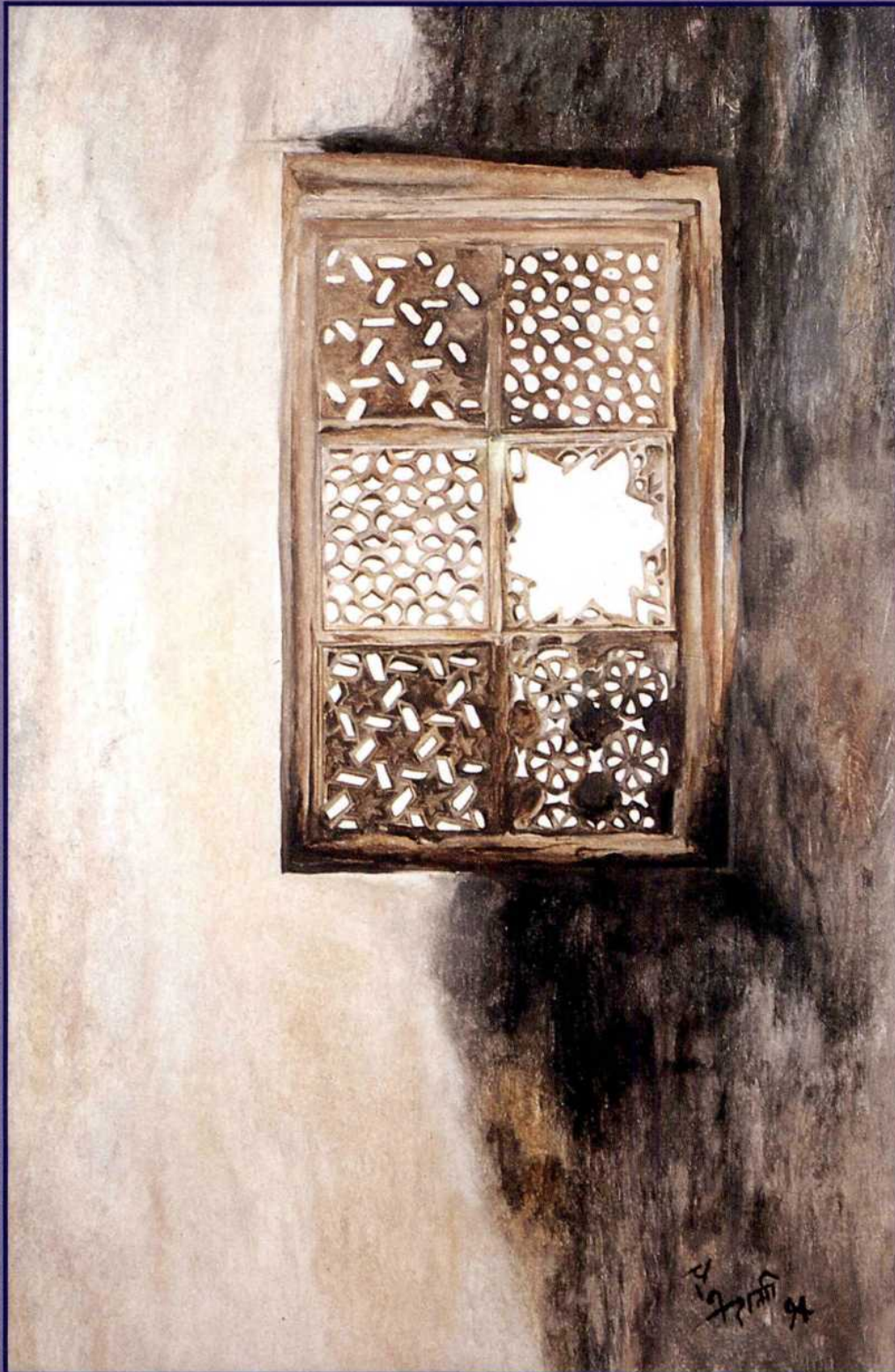


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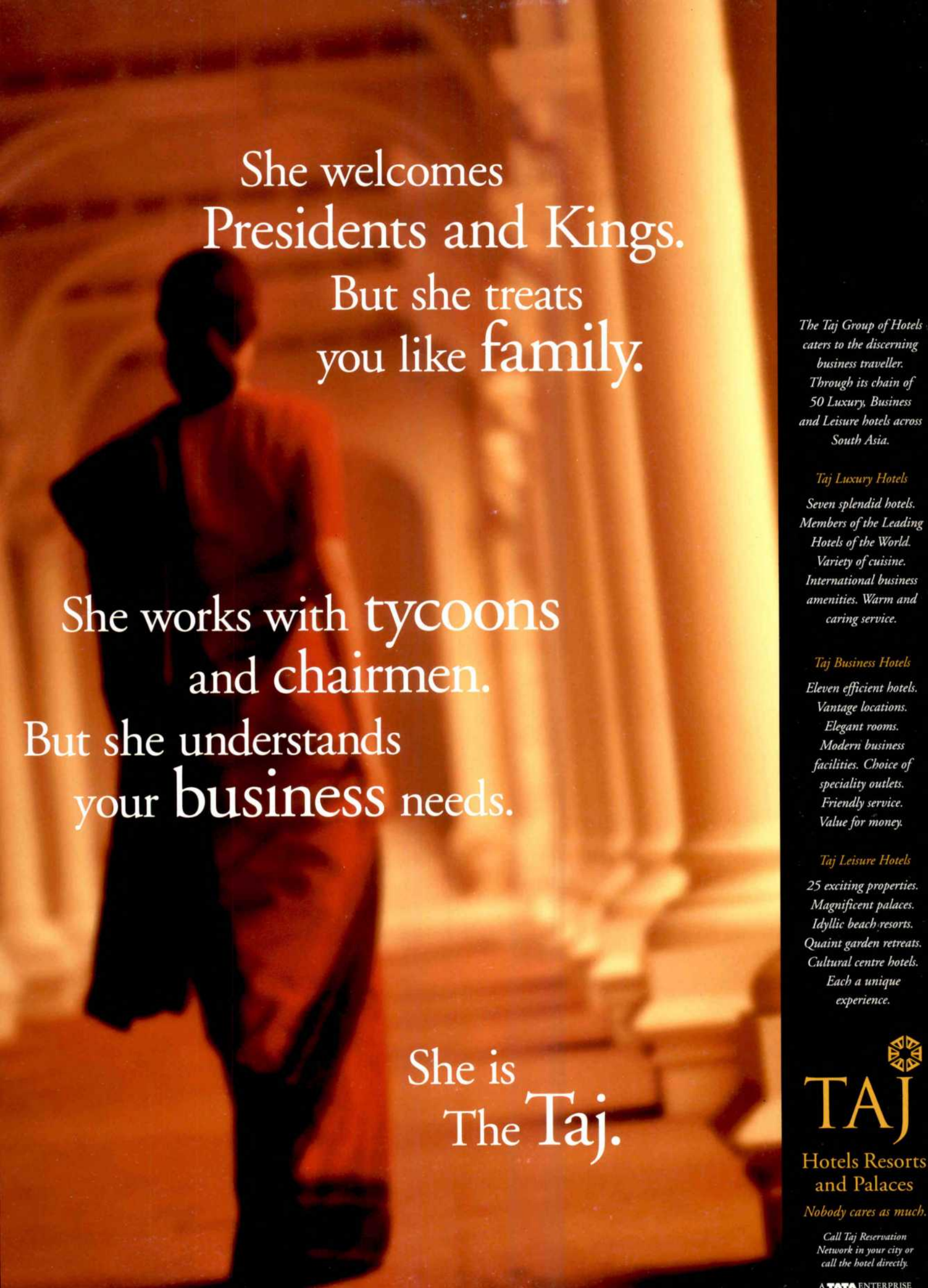
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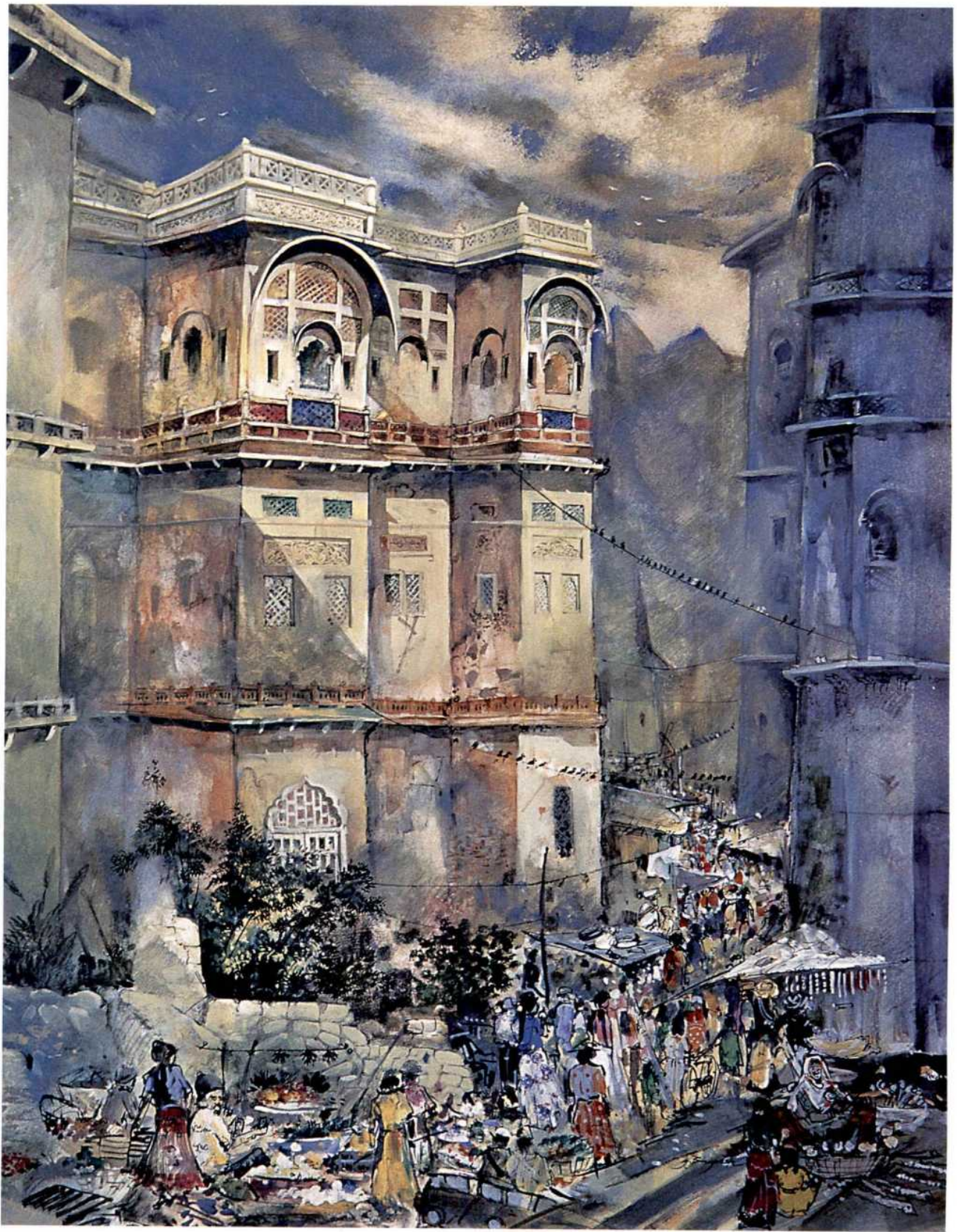
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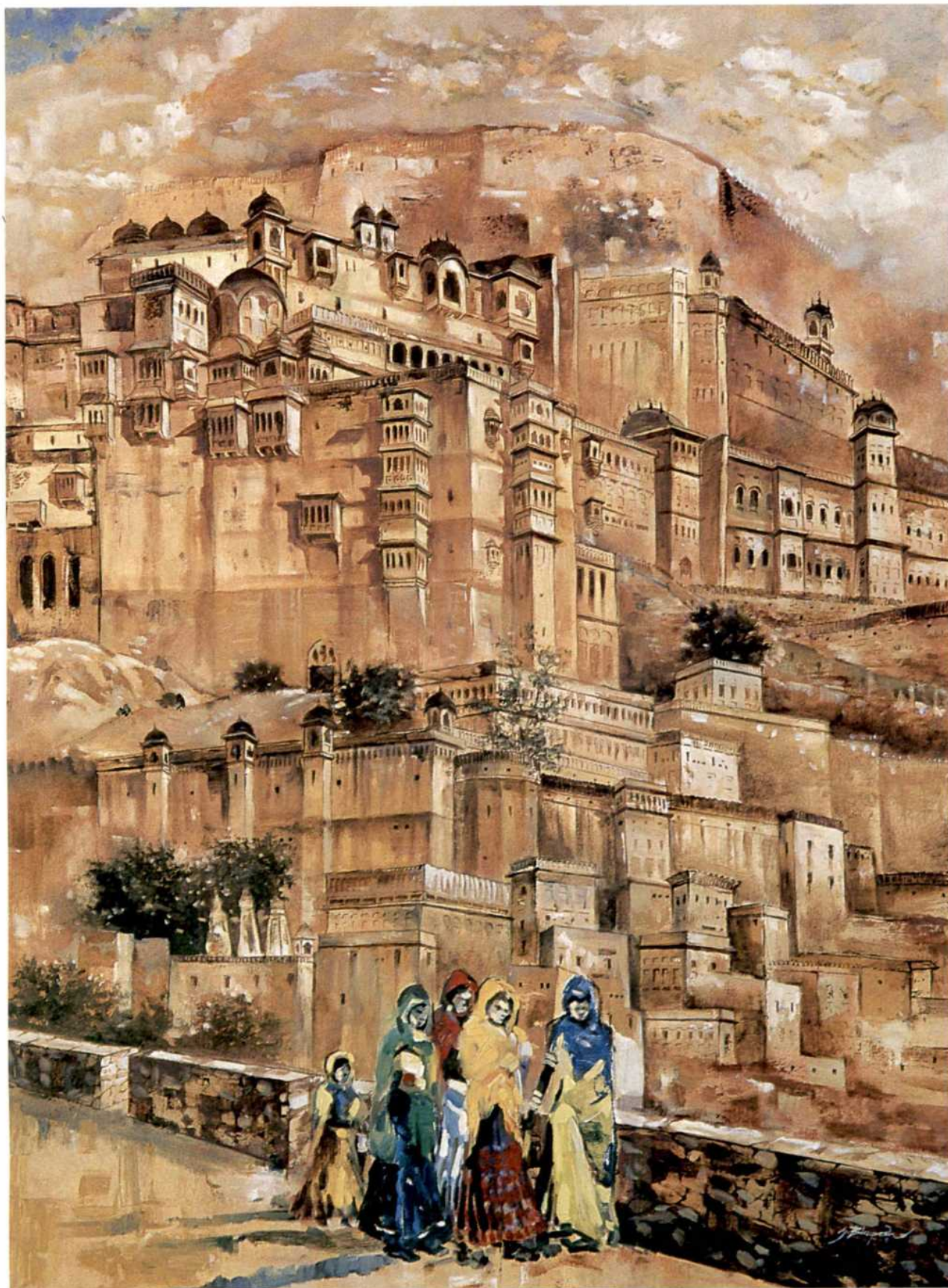
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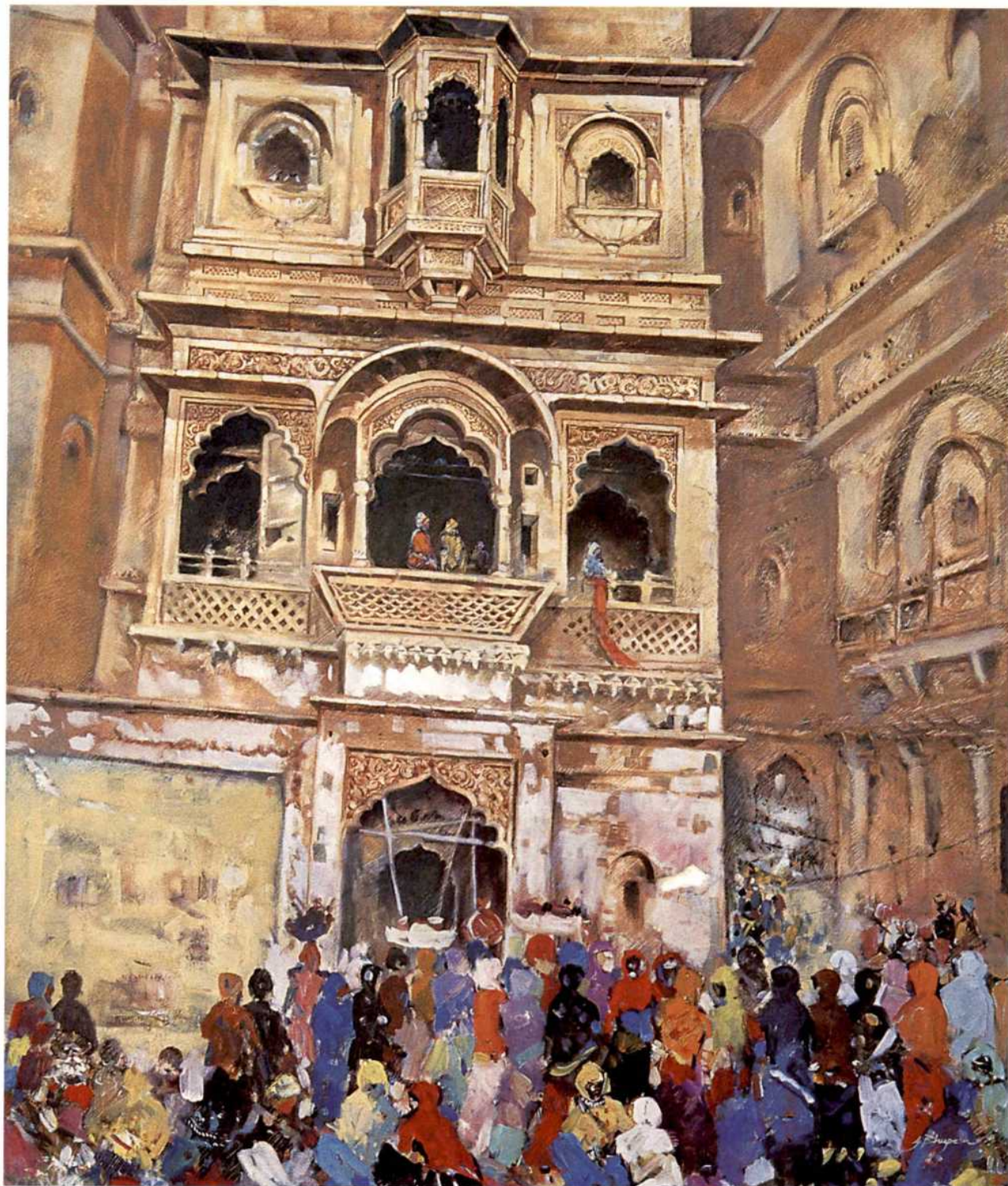
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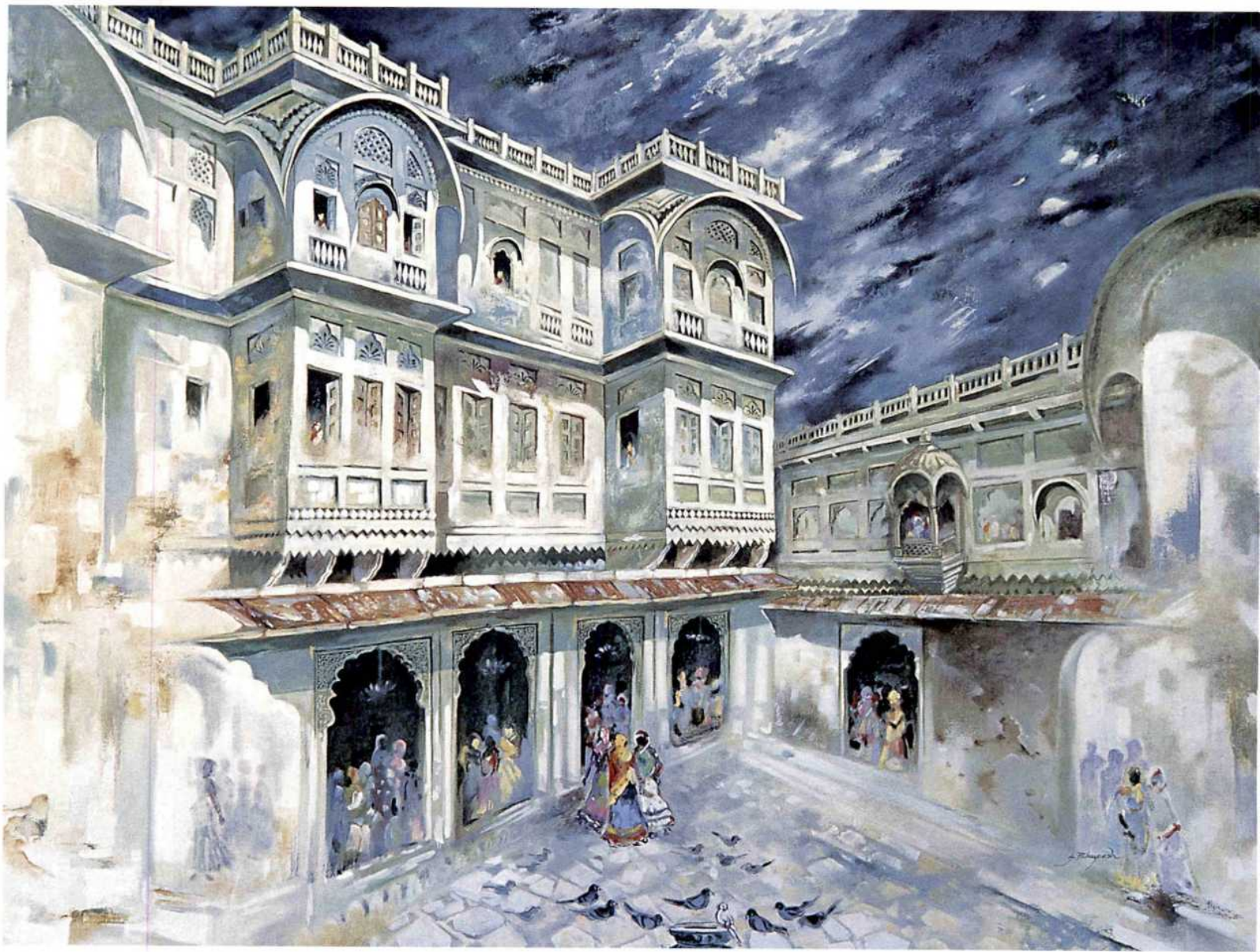




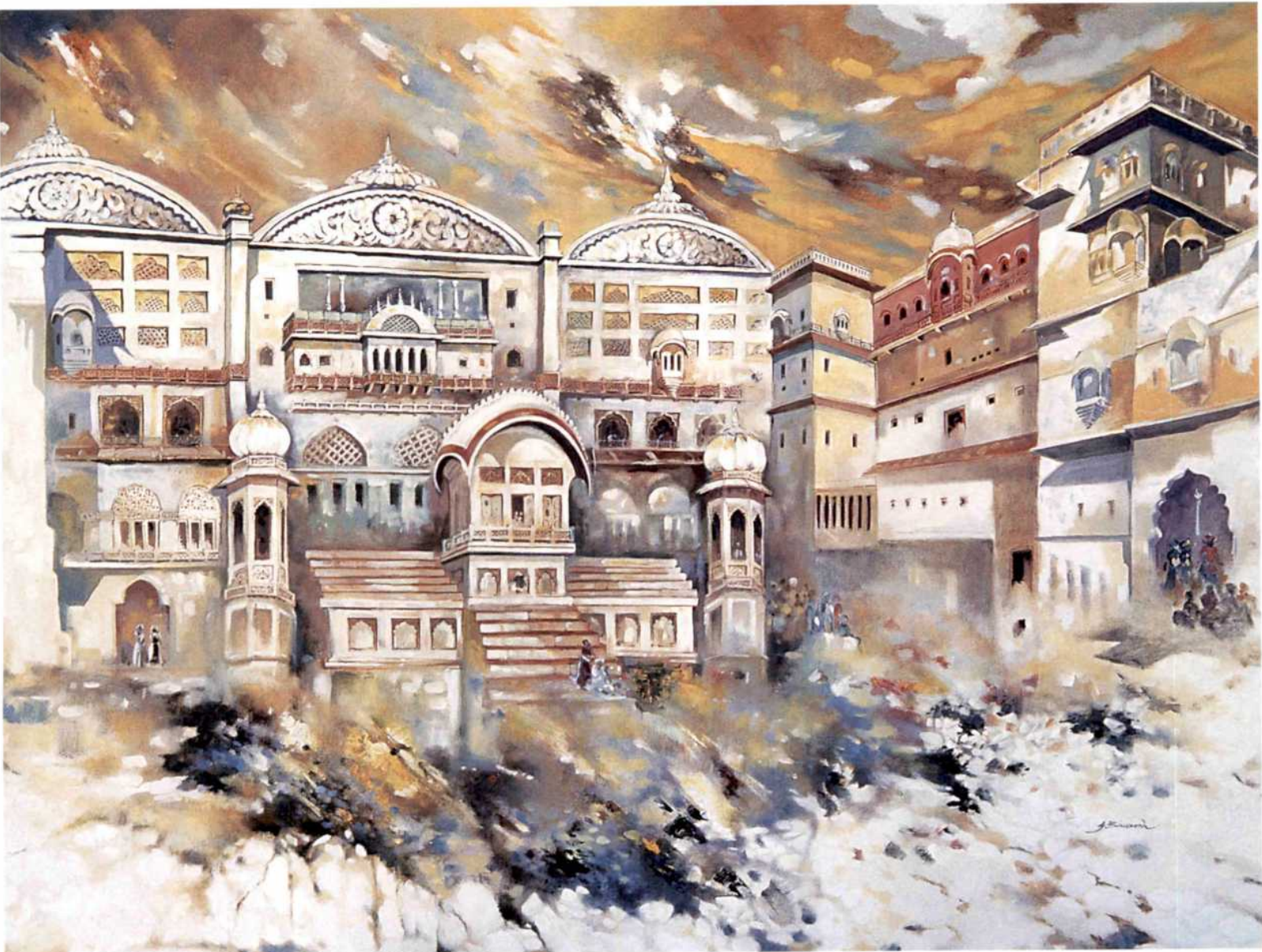
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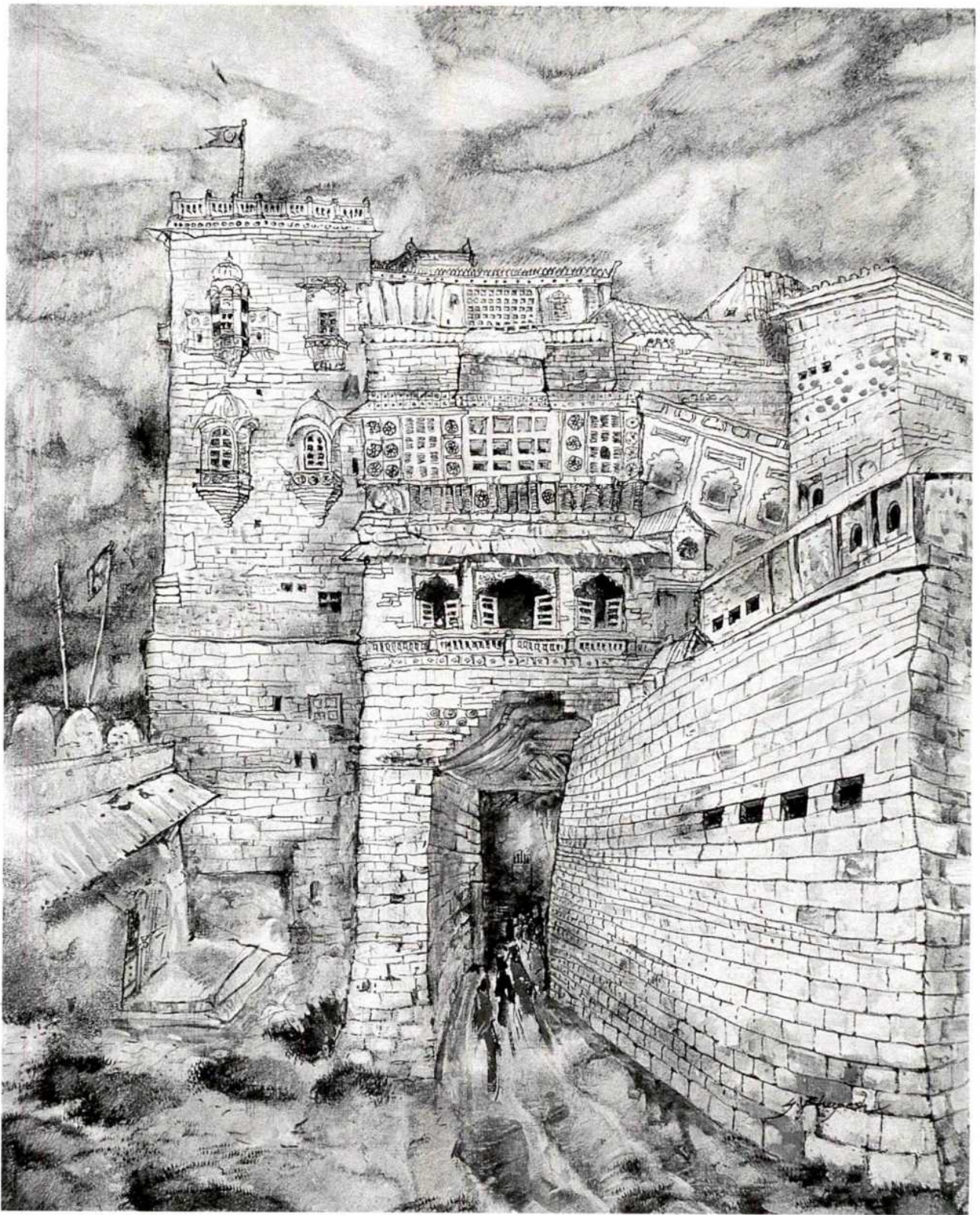
Palace in Mehrangarh, Jodhpur. Bhupesh Godkar, 2001. Oil on canvas.



Alwar Palace. Bhupesh Godkar, 2000. Oil on canvas.

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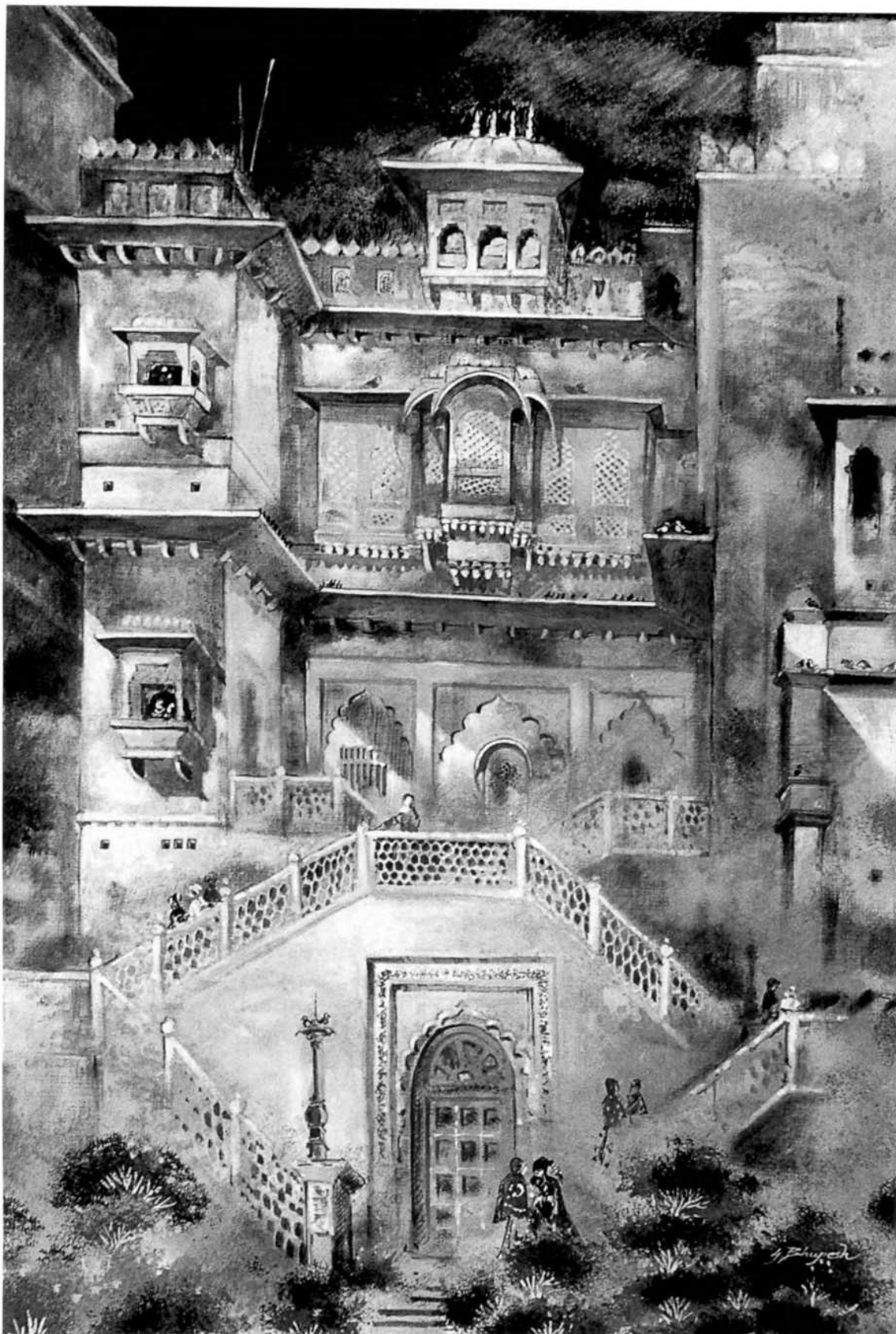


Entrance to Jaisalmer Fort. Bhupesh Godkar, 1999. Acrylic on mount board.

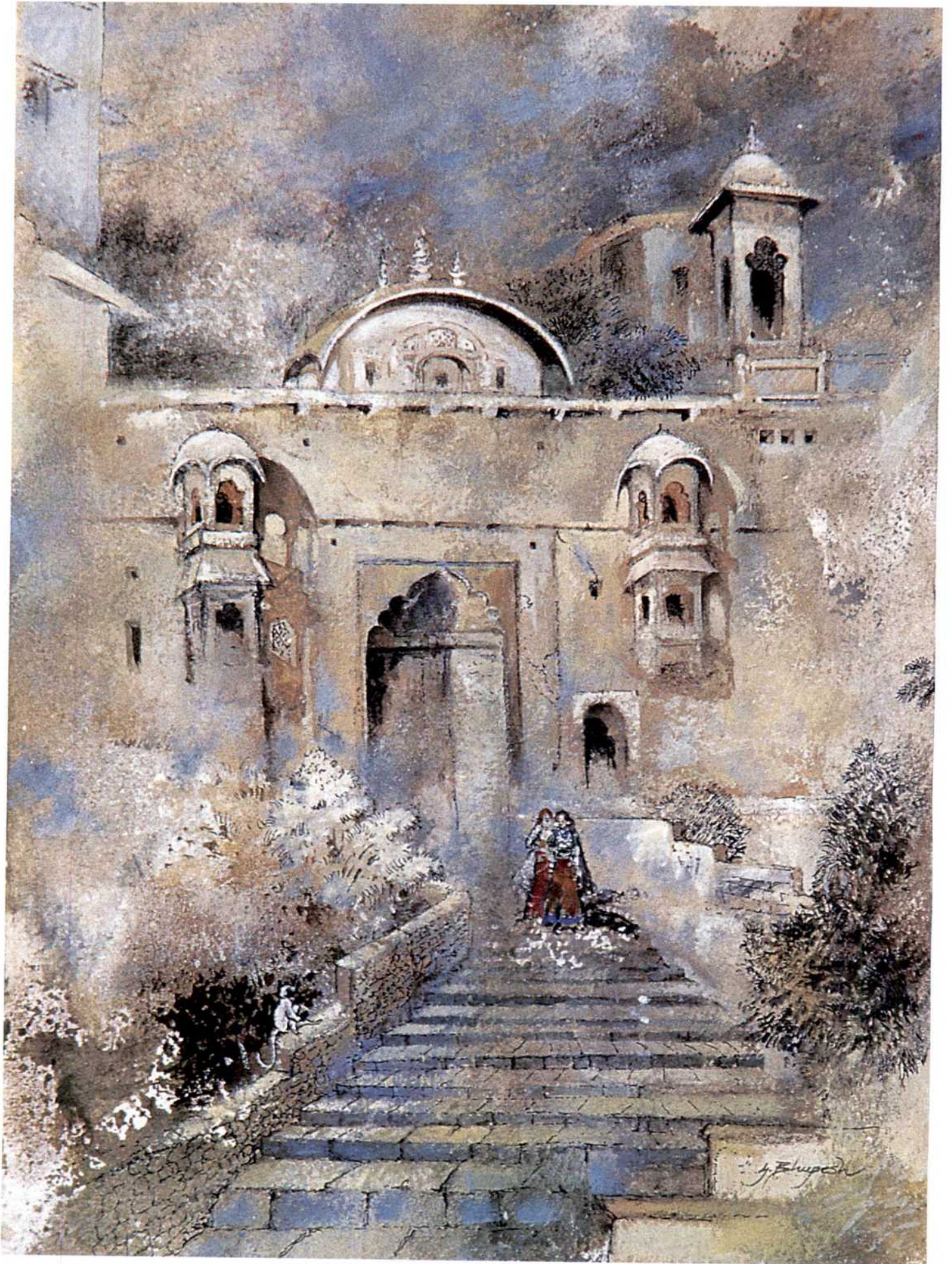


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Vikram Vilas, Bikaner. Bhupesh Godkar, 2000. Acrylic on mount board.



"Memories of Rajasthan". Bhupesh Godkar, 2001. Watercolour on handmade paper.



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FROM THE GENERAL EDITOR'S DESK

TRAGIC VICTIMS OF HUMAN FOLLY

March 2001 may go down in the history of mankind's heritage as one of the most significant. Thanks to the wonders of technology, the result of man's unique intelligence and creativity, the world was able to watch in horror the unfolding of the drama of the destruction of two defenceless statues of the Buddha in the remote valley of Bamiyan in Afghanistan.

The irony is that the Buddhas were destroyed by men – and I purposely stress the gender here – whose ancestors had spent years carving the colossal images out of live rock as acts of piety, perhaps not “Islamic” piety, but piety nonetheless. Horrified, we watched the Taliban leaders first threaten to carry out their dastardly act, constantly rebuking the world for ignoring the misery of their suffering people, and then bang: in minutes with the help of another product of man's creative genius (Mr Alfred Nobel's dynamite), the Buddhas became sad but cherished memories for those who were fortunate enough to have seen them.

Suffering is nothing new to the Afghans, nor are they the only people on earth who are miserable. The “have nots” remain the majority, despite efforts of the Buddha, Christ, and Muhammad, and countless other saints and sages. As Mulk Raj Anand wrote in his editorial for the special issue on Bamiyan published by *Marg* exactly three decades ago in the same month of March,

In fact, in the core of the [Bamiyan] valley, one is aware, suddenly of the conflict of life against death, of the DUKHA [suffering] inherent in the struggle for survival on earth, and of the ecstasies one might win if one strives to overcome the elements, including one's own weakness, frustrations and despairs.

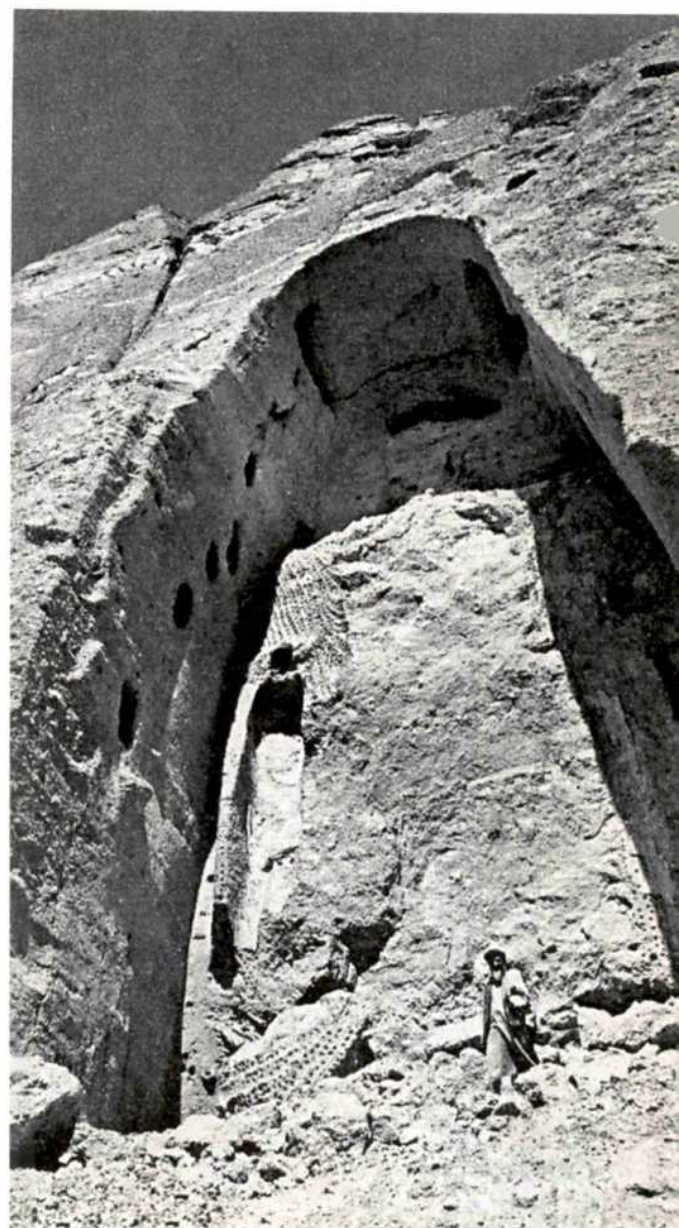
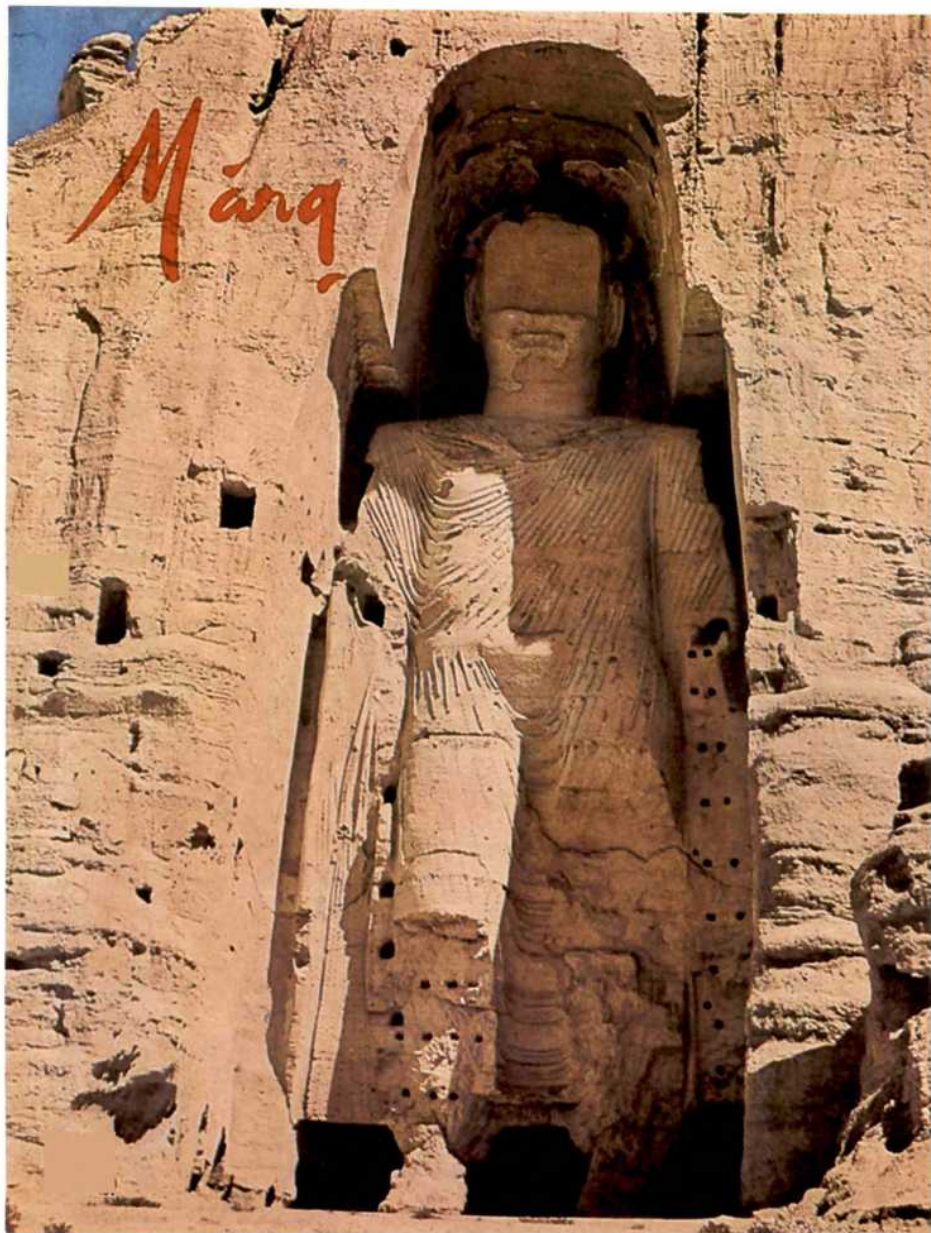
Acts of vandalism and wanton destruction of monuments and art are not a prerogative of misguided and desperate Afghans. Nor is man the only culprit. Witness the recent destruction of the heritage of Gujarat by Nature in January. Not only have buildings and artefacts been damaged beyond repair, but whole villages with specialized craftsmen have been wiped out. Natural calamities are beyond our control and so seems also our own nature. Over the last few years we have caused massive destruction of mankind's heritage in Central Europe, which has mostly gone unreported. An entire culture continues to be obliterated in Tibet and little concern is expressed by the developed world. It was strange to see the Secretary General of the United Nations visit Pakistan in an effort to save the two Buddha statues but do little to save an entire Buddhist culture in Tibet from complete annihilation.

Whatever UNESCO's position now about the loss of the Buddhas, their role in the past has been less than glorious. In 1964, Afghanistan appealed for funds for the restoration and conservation of the statues but none was forthcoming, either from the West or UNESCO. It was India which came forward and worked on the monument from 1969 to 1977. Again, in 1982 the then-Afghan government appealed to UNESCO to declare Bamiyan as a heritage site and, once more, there was no response.

No less ironical was the sight of a high-ranking Indian official appearing on television and offering to save the Bamiyan Buddhas, forgetting that some of his colleagues had aided and abetted the destruction of a mosque only a few years ago. Even more tragic is the continuous encroachment on and destruction of heritage sites, most notably Hampi in Karnataka, across the country, in the name of progress. Thus, the total eradication of the pre-Islamic heritage of Afghanistan is by no means an isolated incident, even if the most hyped and universally condemned.

What has been interesting to watch is the reaction in the West. Some of us witnessed the director of a major American museum appear on television and offer to help relocate the Bamiyan Buddhas, as well

Facing page:
Cover of *Marg*, 24/2,
March 1971, special
issue on Bamiyan; the
site in March 2001,
AP Photo.



as all the countless other Buddhist and Hindu images and artefacts that were vulnerable. (Only secular and Islamic objects remain in the Kabul Museum.) The head of one of the world's richest cultural institutions also expressed similar interest when interviewed by journalists. Writing in an Asian art magazine, the director of a European museum went further and wondered if it made any sense for Western museums to have strict policies regarding acquisitions of works of art from their countries of origin.

The dastardly destruction of all examples of their own non-Islamic heritage by the Taliban will add new fuel to the continuing debate that has been raging in the West for some time between those who espouse the cause of repatriation of all art to the countries of their origin and those who prefer a more moderate and rational policy. *The New York Times* (March 31, 2001) quoted Christian Manhart, Program Director for Asia in UNESCO's division of cultural heritage as saying, "Our Director General is very clear about this: he wants the safekeeping of these objects outside Afghanistan," while the Director General himself, Koichiro Matsuura, commented, "This general mobilization in favor of cultural heritage has transcended the boundaries between nationalities and religion."

I am not quite sure what exactly is meant by the loaded expression "general mobilization" but whatever we do now will be too little too late, as far as the heritage of Afghanistan is concerned. In the meantime, however, I gather one can buy small segments of the destroyed Bamiyan Buddhas in the bazaars of Pakistan to take home as souvenirs.

Pratap Singh

OF BUILDINGS AND BOOKS

The Theory and Practice of the Architect Mandan

Rima Hooja

The “medieval” period of Rajasthan, chronicled by bards as an age of battles and dashing heroism, witnessed a flowering of architecture and literature too. Among the outstanding figures of 15th-century Rajasthan was Maharana Kumbha of Mewar (r. 1433–68), who combined scholarship and patronage of the arts with life as a warrior-king.

Carrying his arms against the kingdoms of Malwa, Gujarat, Sirohi, Bundi, Kota, Amber, and Marwar, Kumbha even invaded Mandu in 1437, and imprisoned Malwa’s sultan, Mahmud Khalji, for about six months at Chittorgarh, the capital of Mewar (figure 1). A chain of new and renovated forts girdled Mewar’s expanding frontiers. In fact, 32 out of Mewar’s 84 forts, including Kumbhalgarh, Achalgarh, Vasantgarh, Machan, Kolan, Vairat, and Ahore, are attributed to Kumbha. Besides forts, numerous temples, palaces, water-reservoirs, and other buildings too were constructed by Kumbha across Mewar.

MANDAN: A 15TH-CENTURY ARCHITECT

Considerable credit for the architectural splendour of Kumbha’s reign goes to the architect-artisan Mandan, son of Kshetra. Mandan’s works include the forts (containing temples, granaries, storehouses, reservoirs, and other structures) of Kumbhalgarh, Achalgarh, and Vasantgarh, and a Vishnu temple at Eklingji (figures 2 and 3).

Mandan was not the sole architect at Kumbha’s court, though. The Adinath Chaumukha temple of 1439 at Ranakpur, commissioned by Kumbha’s minister, Dharnaka, was designed by Deep, while Chittorgarh’s much-discussed “Victory Tower” was built for Kumbha by Jaita and his sons, Napa and Punja (figures 4 and 5). The names of several architects patronized by Kumbha are listed in epigraphs like the Ranakpur temple inscription of 1439. These architect-artisans belonged to families traditionally

associated with building. Mandan’s sons, Govind and Ishvar, and his brother, Nath, were architects too. Nath compiled the *Vastu Manjari* and Govind the *Uddhar Dharani*, *Dvaradipika*, and *Kalanidhi*, while Ishvar constructed a Vishnu temple at Jawar for princess Ramabai. Later, Ishvar’s son, Chhitra, became the court-architect of Kumbha’s son, Raimal (r. 1473–1508). In an age of numerous architects and effusive building activity, Mandan holds a special place because, besides being an active architect, he compiled several Sanskrit manuscripts on architecture. These are the *Vastu Mandan*, *Rupa Mandan*, *Prasada Mandan*, *Raja Vallabh Mandan*, *Vastusaar*, *Vastushastra*, *Apatattva*, and *Devata Murti Prakarnam*.

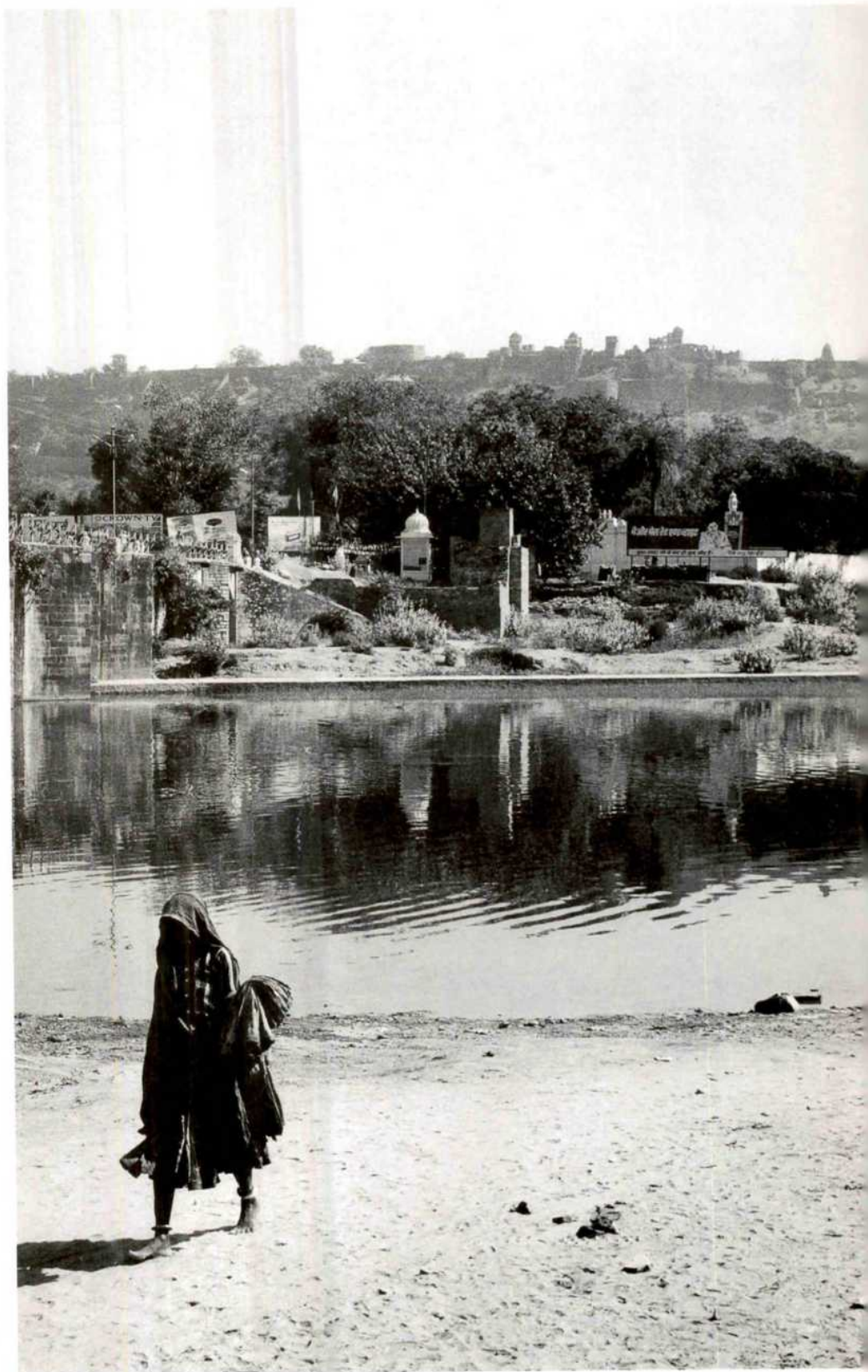
Descriptions provided in Mandan’s texts approximate closely with actual surviving examples of 15th-century (and subsequent) temples, palaces, and other structures from Mewar. For instance, the architecture and iconography of Udaipur’s Jagdish temple built in 1651 (figure 6), and the pavilions and embankment at Rajasamand Lake from the 1670s conform to Mandan’s style. The palaces built at Udaipur (circa 1559) and elsewhere in Mewar broadly conform with Mandan’s instructions too, though over time, features inspired by the Mughal architectural style were also incorporated.

Mandan’s texts spread outside Mewar as well, and within two centuries of being composed, over half a dozen manuscript copies were in the Kashi (Varanasi) library of a Deccan brahman known as “Kavindra Acharya”. Unfortunately, not all of Mandan’s texts are easily available today, particularly in translation. A summary of his *Prasada Mandan*, *Raja Vallabh Mandan*, *Devata Murti Prakarnam*, and *Rupa Mandan* may thus be relevant here.

The *Prasada Mandan* summarizes the main features of temple architecture, along with that of

monasteries, schools, palaces, forts, step-wells, and lakes. Chapter one details categories of temples, the selection of terrain, site, soil, and building materials for temples, and other general conventions. The next chapter covers issues like the *jagati* (plinth) area, shrines to various deities (including the Jain Tirthankaras), and the *panchayatana* (or five-cell) form of temples. Chapter three prescribes the scale of temples, foundations, walls, door-sills, and lintels, while the fourth chapter discusses the *garbhagriha* (inner sanctum), *shikhara* (temple tower), and related features. Chapters five and six cover different types of temples. Interestingly, Mandan has discussed not just the *nagara* style, common to Mewar (and broadly speaking to northern and western India), but also the *dravida* and *vesara* styles, associated more with the south. The porches and halls (*mandapa*) within a temple complex are discussed in chapter seven, while the final chapter expounds on altars (*yajna-kunda*), architectural shortcomings, and formulae for the restoration and reconsecration of old temples, idols, or even reservoirs, in accordance with religious principles.

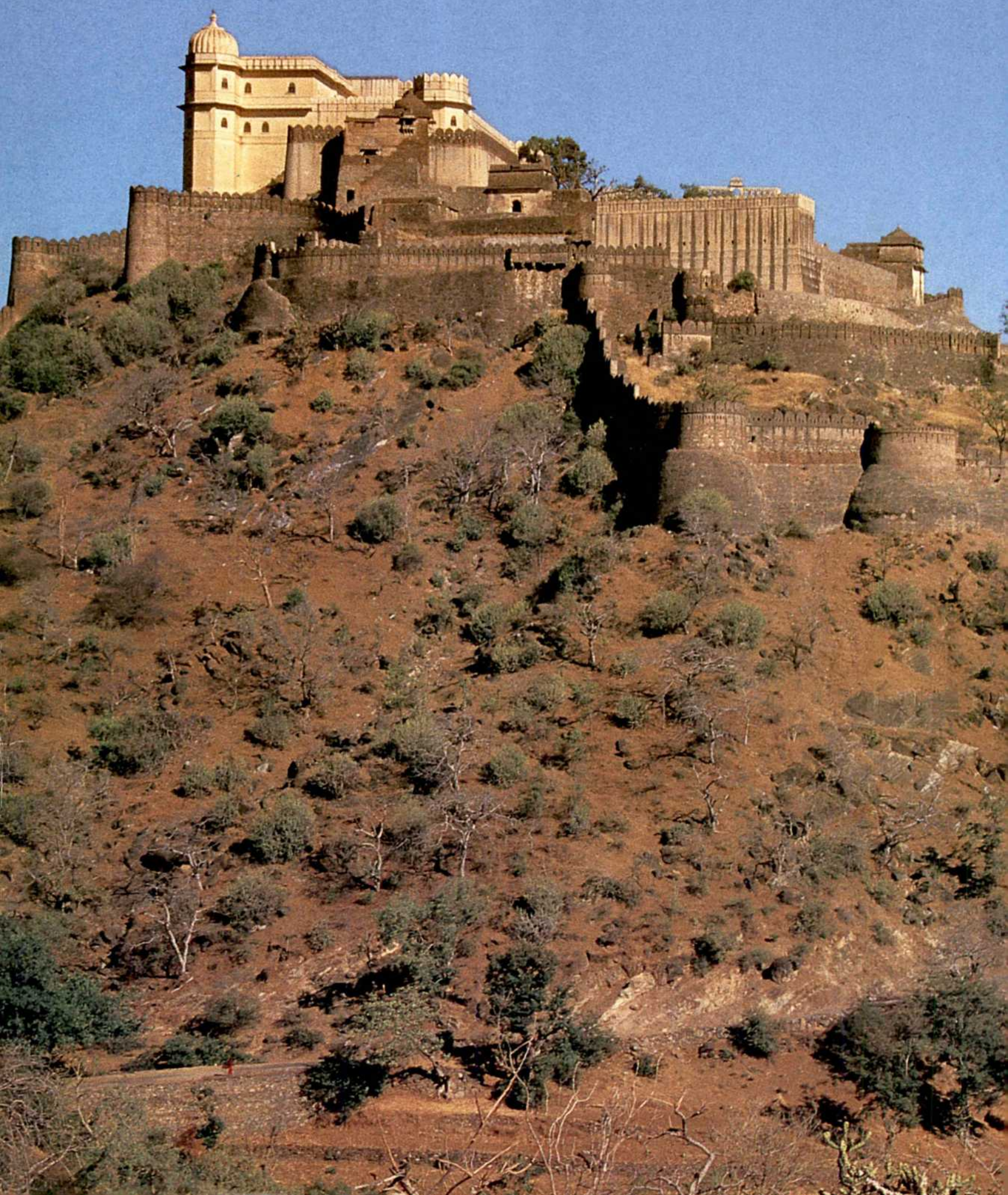
Mandan's best-known text, the *Raja Vallabh Mandan* (better known merely as the *Raja Vallabh*) covers a range of architectural activity. This includes forts, palaces, mansions, ordinary homes, step-wells, and reservoirs. The opening chapter includes aspects like suitable sites, terrain, and vegetation for a range of structures, and auspicious and inauspicious entrances to buildings. Terms like *vastu purusha* are defined in the second chapter, along with information about altars, and related details. The third chapter concentrates on architecture and the zodiac, while chapter four discusses the establishment of new towns, and auspicious and inauspicious elements with regard to these. Details about forts, wells, step-wells, and tanks are also provided. The



fifth chapter focuses on palaces, mansions of courtiers and wealthy merchants, and homes of ordinary citizens. Continuing the subject, chapter six covers single-roomed houses, and chapter seven two-roomed, three-roomed, and four-roomed houses. Chapter eight takes up aspects like beds, thrones, canopies, balconies, ventilation, assembly rooms, ritual-related platforms (*vedi*), and lamp-pillars (*dipa-stambha*) for illumination. Aspects like the location and fabrication of apartments suitable for the

1
Chittorgarh: part of the fort, seen from the lower plain, to the west.

**Kumbhalgarh: part of
the fort wall, with
palace apartments on
higher ground to the
left.**





3
Eklingji: temples and
memorial *chhatris*
around the tank.



4
Ranakpur: entrance to
the Adinath temple,
from the west.



5
Chittorgarh: the "Victory
Tower" built for Rana
Kumbha.





6
Udaipur: the Jagdish temple.

heir-apparent and other princes, and apartments appropriate for the queens, and the zenana in general, and architectural features auspicious for the homes of officials and courtiers are covered in the ninth chapter. Chapter ten focuses on the scale and proportions for different structures, while chapters eleven, twelve, and thirteen cover dates, constellations, and other astrology-related details; with the final chapter focusing mainly on omens.

In contrast, the *Devata Murti Prakarnam* (also called *Rupavatar*) concentrates on iconography. Suitable stones for sculpture, heights of idols and shrines, interpretation of omens, and misfortunes stemming from incorrectly made idols, are

among the aspects covered in its first chapter. The next chapter deals with the scale for statues of deities, demi-gods, humans, and animals, while chapter three details the position of specific idols within temples. Following this “technical” information, chapter four details the portrayal of Surya, Brahma, and “minor” deities, while chapter five describes Vishnu images and holy *shalagram* (ammonites), besides companion statues. The sixth chapter covers the iconography of Shiva and composite statues which combine the attributes of two or more different deities in a single statue (an example is the composite idol of Surya, Vishnu, Shiva, and Brahma, “Surya-Hari-Hara-Pitamaha”). The iconography of the 24 Jain Tirthankaras and their attendants is described in chapter seven, while the last chapter focuses on statues of Devi, besides Ganesh, Karttikeya, and Kshetrapala.

The *Rupa Mandan*, though somewhat similar to the *Devata Murti Prakarnam*, is a separate composition in six chapters. The first chapter covers aspects like scale, stones suitable for idols, and inauspicious traits in sculpture. Chapter two discusses damaged statues, along with the depiction of Brahma and Surya. Idols of Vishnu, ammonites, and associated statues are described in chapter three. The fourth chapter focuses on Shiva, composite images, and related issues, while chapter five mainly details idols of Devi, along with associated statues, and the last chapter covers the Tirthankaras.

Mandan’s texts uniformly warn against transgression from prescribed formulae, as that invites divine retribution in the form of famine, pestilence, and calamities. Injudiciously located temples, palaces, or idols also deprive the populace and their ruler of divine protection. This underlines the importance of adhering to specified norms in the architecture of temples and towns of medieval Rajasthan, though whether this was always a decisive element requires further analysis.

Significantly, Mandan’s treatises did not calculatedly attempt to overset existing practice. Rather, they embodied established conventions, based on the local working tradition of contemporary Rajasthan and accepted canons on architecture (*shilpa shastra*). The latter had originated over different periods, and included texts like the *Manasara*, *Mayamata*, *Shilpa Ratna*,

Kashyapa Shilpa, Brihata Samhita, Bimba Prakarnam, Matsya Purana, Agni Purana, Vishnudharmottara Purana, and Vastusara Prakarnam. Not all were uniformly applicable across South Asia, and later compilations often adapted only immediately relevant portions. Mandan's treatises drew from 10th to 13th-century western Indian texts like Bhuvan Dev's *Aparajitaprichha*, Parmar king Bhoj's *Samarangana Sutradhara*, and Hemadri's *Chaturvarga Chintamani* too, as they did from local working traditions.

Rajasthan's architectural tradition had developed over a considerable period, with some towns and temples going well back into early historical times. In fact, the sheer quantity of stone-built forts, temples, and step-wells to be found in Rajasthan is astounding in itself. Integrating this heritage into his treatises, Mandan created a body of information, which, while codifying and collating traditional notions of architecture, also perhaps gave legitimacy to trends and styles that had developed subsequent to the penning of previous canons.

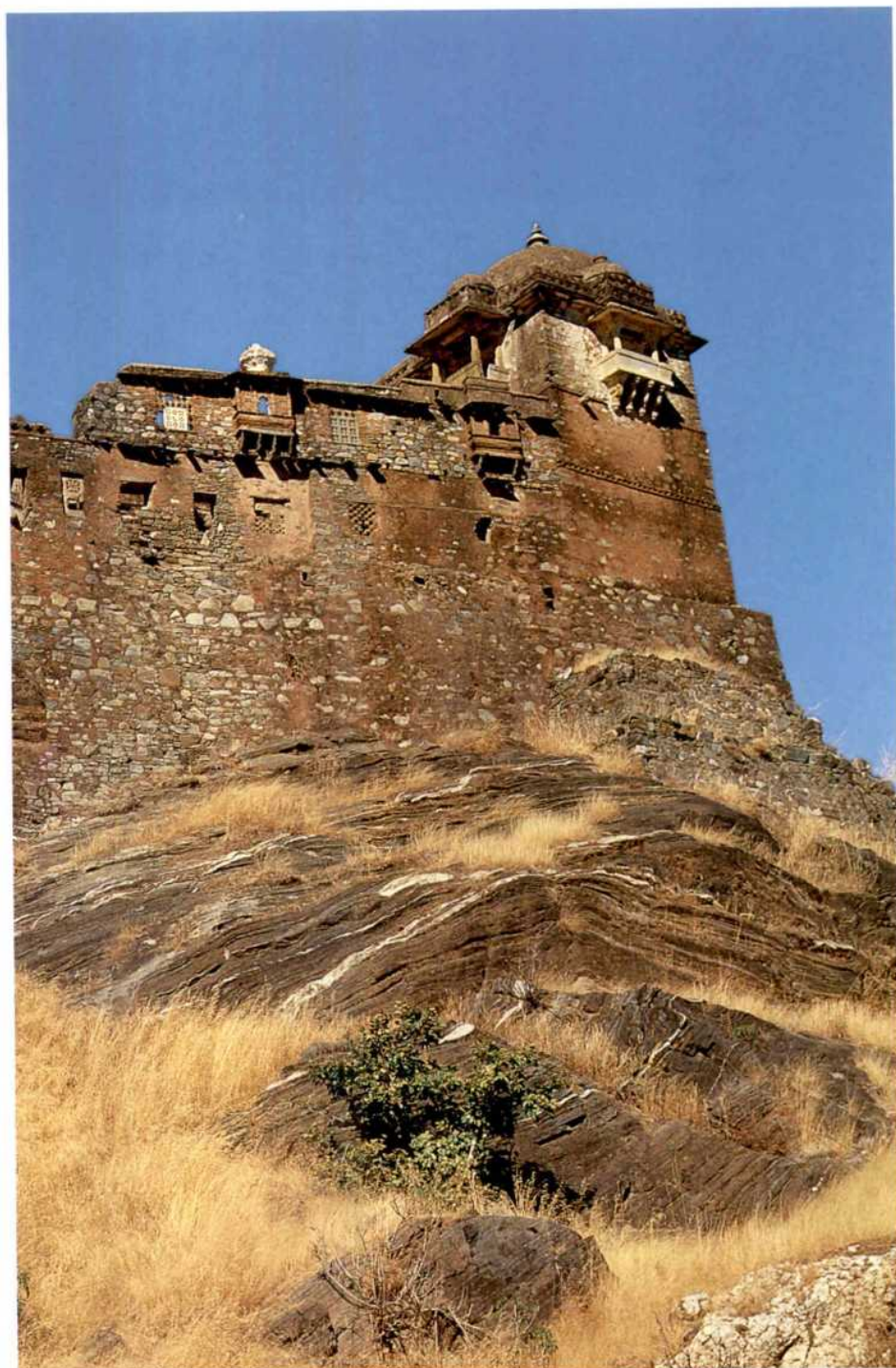
KUMBHA, MANDAN, AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF MEWAR

The architecture of Kumbha's reign is inseparable from both the flamboyant Maharana himself, an acknowledged musician, composer, dramatist, and linguist, who commissioned many building works, and his architect-artisan Mandan, whose body of written material was useful to his contemporary architects as well as their successors. Mandan personally gave substance to the instructions embodied in his texts, translating them into reality at the several building-works put into his care by his discerning sovereign. Prominent amongst these is the fort of Kumbhalgarh.

Situated on a hill-peak of the Aravali range, Kumbhalgarh (also called Kumbhalmer), rises some 213 metres above the surrounding countryside, with a commanding view of the Aravalis to its east, south, and west, and part of Marwar's desert terrain to its northwest. The Kumbhalgarh Inscription (1460) records that Mandan began construction here in 1443 and the work was completed in 1459. In time, this fort became Kumbha's second and more favoured capital.

The narrow approach to the fort lies past a series of protective walls and defensive fortifications, which enclose several nearby hillocks. Successive battlements and bastions, seven fortified gates, and a winding approach to the upper reaches ensured additional security for the main habitation area of the fort. The formidable bastions were designed to remain inaccessible to an attacking enemy, and the high battlement wall was built broad enough for several horsemen to ride abreast across it. Within this, Mandan built a palace, several temples, a granary, stables for horses and elephants, an armoury for small arms, gunpowder, and swords, and a larger *topkhana* for cannons (figures 7 and

7
Kumbhalgarh: palace
apartments within the
fort.





8). Other structures included barracks for soldiers and several storehouses for items like grain, oil, salt, foodstuff, as well as fodder for horses. All these mandatory aspects of traditional Rajput hill-forts were positioned in accordance with the instructions contained in Mandan's own texts, with which they also conformed in appearance and proportion.

The ruler's palace was situated, citadel-like, within an inner fort called Katar-Garh, commanding a panoramic view of the surrounding area. Kumbha's own apartments within his palace were relatively simple (as seems the case at Chittorgarh). They consisted of two main chambers, one over the other, flanked by side-rooms. As at Chittorgarh, the secluded zenana apartments were separated from the general palace area by a narrow walled gallery. Both areas were self-sufficient, with several sets of apartments, halls, temples, stores, and watch-towers. Katar-Garh enclosed numerous structures, like the Jhalia Mahal, Badal Mahal, and Tara Burj, some of which were added to or renovated by Kumbha's successors, including Maharana Fateh Singh (r. 1884–1930). Later rulers made additions at Chittorgarh too.

As upheld in Mandan's treatises, Kumbhalgarh was provided with a number of water tanks and reservoirs (*kunda*). These were mainly located in

the lower reaches, where agriculture could be carried out. Interconnected reservoirs ensured irrigation facilities. Most of the houses, and some temples and other structures were located on the higher contoured levels, though these were well below Katar-Garh. Temples at Kumbhalgarh datable to this period include the Nilakantha Mahadev, Kumbha-swami and Mama-dev temples, among others. Besides these, Mandan built a *vedi* (altar) at Kumbhalgarh for the performance of the *yajna* (ritual oblations poured into a sacred fire), which Maharana Kumbha regularly performed. The altar, within its original two-storeyed, dome-topped building still stands, though it has been considerably altered since Kumbha's time.

Mandan's texts stressed gardens as an integral aspect of architecture, detailing a variety of fruit-bearing and other trees, shrubs, and flowering plants suitable for gardens. Other essentials for a good garden, according to Mandan, included raised seats (*vedika*), pavilions (*mandapa*), and small tanks. Kumbha, like his immediate predecessors, is known to have patronized gardens and orchards as architectural accompaniments to palaces and public areas, and records tell us that gardens were laid for him at several places, including Kumbhalgarh and Chittorgarh. Though none of Kumbha's 15th-

century gardens have come down to us unaltered, probably Mandan's suggestions were followed regarding these. Over a century later, Mughal-inspired water-channels and the *charbagh* style of raised terraces and fountains were incorporated into the local style; this gave rise to the latter-day gardens represented by Udaipur's Sahelion-ki Bari and Jag Mandir, among others.

Construction was carried out in annexed territories too. For example, to consolidate Mewar's hold over tracts seized from the neighbouring kingdom of Sirohi, and to serve as military posts, Kumbha gave Mandan the task of re-fortification and repair at the ancient fort of Achalgarh (near Abu), in 1450–52. Around 1452, Mandan was also charged with the construction of a fort at Vasantgarh, also in the Abu-Sirohi region, and with an equally long history.

Achalgarh, located on a peak in the Abu range of the Aravalis, had originally been fortified and inhabited some four centuries earlier by the Parmar rulers of Abu, atop an older site. For Kumbha it was a vital stronghold, guarding the southern reaches of Mewar against armies

marching from Malwa, Gujarat, Sirohi, Nagaur, and Jalore. Mandan's construction work at Achalgarh (as at Vasantgarh) included fortifications, gates, watch-towers, guard-rooms, a large granary, armoury, temples, palace, and reservoirs. Once again here, the architectural layout, style, proportions, and plan of specific buildings corresponded fully with Mandan's treatises on architecture. For example, reservoirs were built nearer the base of the fort, while the palaces were located, citadel-like, on higher points. Mandan recommended the centre of the town or an elevated area as ideal locations for the ruler's palace. New temples and statues too were located in keeping with architectural and iconographical formulae delineated by Mandan in his texts.

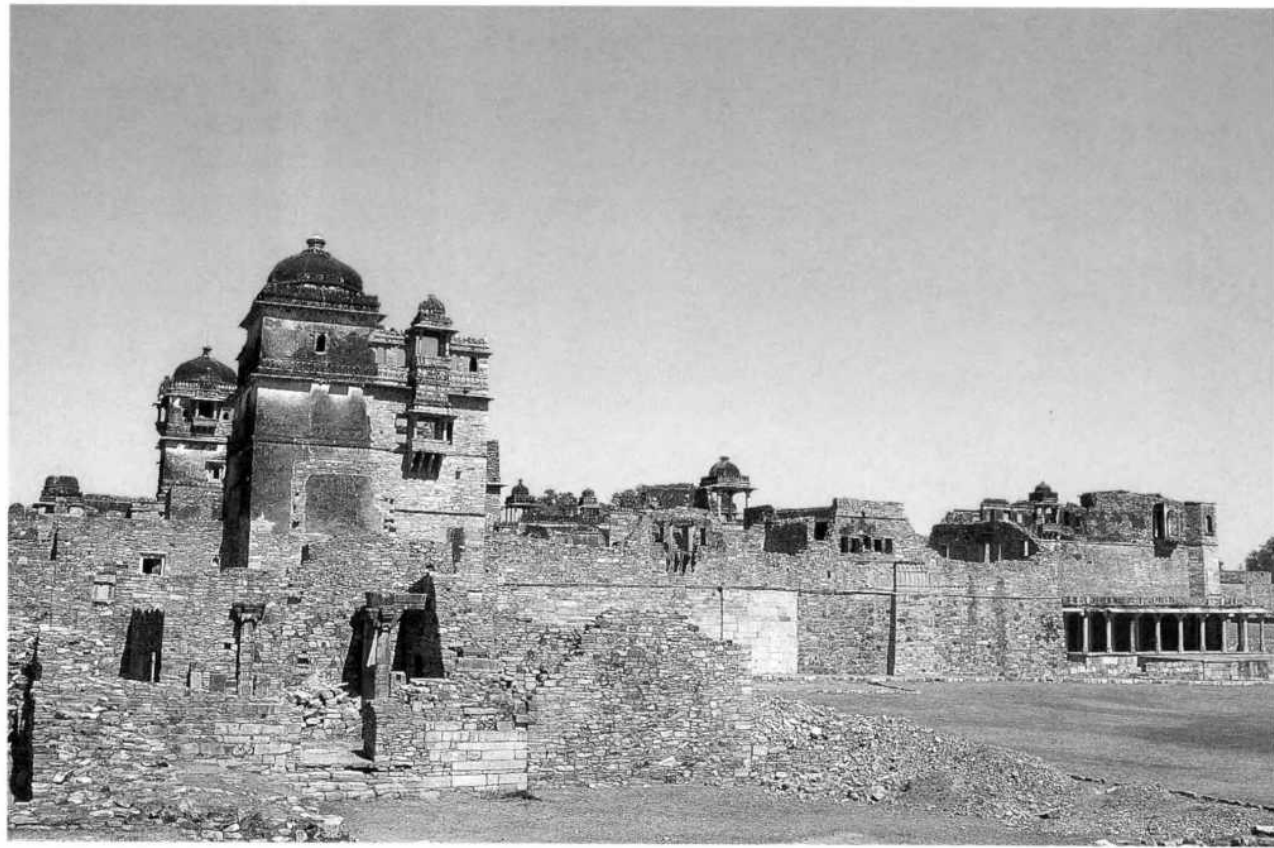
Simultaneously, besides various new or renovated forts, Kumbha ordered the strengthening of old fortifications and construction of additional defensive structures at several places. Among these were circular bastions, towers, and seven extant defensive gates (namely Padan Pol, Bhairon Pol, Hanuman

9
Chittorgarh: Ram Pol at the head of the ascent road to the fort.



10

Chittorgarh: Rana Kumbha's palace from the south (with the open columned *sabha* to the far right).



Pol, Ganesh Pol, Jordla Pol, Lakshman Pol, and Ram Pol) built at Chittorgarh, along with a paved chariotway leading to the fort (figure 9). New palaces were built across Mewar too, and old ones enlarged, at Kumbha's command. These also correspond with descriptions provided in Mandan's texts. The relatively simple palace named after Kumbha at Chittorgarh is now mostly in ruins, but enough remains to form an idea of the architecture involved (figures 10 and 11). In plan, it represents mid-15th-century (pre-Mughal) Rajput civil architecture. It also conforms with both Mandan's treatises and his Kumbhalgarh palaces.

Mandan's model palace-complex included separate sets of apartments for the king, heir-apparent and other princes, closely approximating the later-period male (*mardana*) portion of Rajput (and Mughal) palaces, besides an inner palace (*ravala* or *zenana*) area. The latter was reserved for the use of the queen and women of the royal family, and their servitors and attendants, again self-contained with separate sets of apartments. Essentials for a well-planned royal palace included an assembly hall, dining area, public chambers, a picture-gallery, a concert-hall for music or to watch dancing, treasury, armoury, stables, storehouses, kitchens, temples and small shrines, and guard-rooms. These guidelines appear to have been closely followed for

Kumbha's palaces at Chittorgarh, just as they were for Kumbhalgarh.

Kumbha's enclosed Chittorgarh palace complex was entered through the Badi Pol and Tripolia gates (figure 12). Within the now ruined complex, separate structures, including stables for horses and elephants, a hall for public audience, a balcony from which the ruler is believed to have offered daily oblations to the Sun, a temple to Shiva, pillared corridors, courtyards, and the heir-apparent's apartments, may still be seen. It is more than probable that earlier structures were also reused for Kumbha's palace complex. It is believed that the *jauhar* (group self-immolation) performed by Queen Padmini and other women and children of the fort in 1303, prior to Chittorgarh's conquest by Sultan Alauddin Khilji of Delhi (r. 1296–1316), occurred in the vast, vaulted cellars discovered beneath Kumbha's palace.

Temples and sculpture were also fabricated in large numbers during Kumbha's reign. Occasionally, temples were rebuilt over structures dating to earlier periods. A case in point is Chittorgarh's Kumbhashyam temple, built for Kumbha in 1448, atop the remains and substructure of the 9th-century Kukudeshwar temple (figure 13). Among the many temples built at Kumbha's command, mention may be made of the Adi-Varaha temple at Chittorgarh,



11
Chittorgarh: the north
front of Rana
Kumbha's palace.



12
Chittorgarh: Badi
Pol, the outermost
entrance to Rana
Kumbha's palace.

13
Chittorgarh: the temple
of Kumbhashyam.



14
Chittorgarh: the
12th-century Jain
Kirti Stambha, or
"Tower of Fame".



and the Mandan-designed and -built temples of Nilakantha Mahadev (Kumbhalgarh), Vishnu (Eklingji), and Achaleshwar Mahadev (Achalgarh). Maharana Kumbha's courtiers also had temples (and wells) constructed at their own cost, in keeping with ancient tradition, which enjoined such acts of piety. This is exemplified by several temples at Ranakpur, Sirohi, and Chittorgarh, including Chittorgarh's famous Shringar-Chauri temple of 1448, commissioned by Velaka, the son of Kumbha's treasurer. The iconography and building features described in Mandan's *Devata Murti Prakarnam* and *Rupa Mandan* are well illustrated at these temples, just as much as in Mandan's own sculptures found in situ at Kumbhalgarh, possibly because these were a furtherance of, rather than a break with, established iconographical and architectural tradition.

The iconography prescribed in Mandan's texts also finds textbook illustration in the 37-metre-high Victory Tower built for Kumbha at Chittorgarh by architect Jaita (figure 5). This nine-storey-high tower, with sculpture and friezes decorating the internal and external surfaces of the structure, and an internal staircase, bears an inscription of 1460. Jaita's design was undoubtedly derived from Chittorgarh's 22-metre-high 12th-century Jain Kirti Stambha, erected by the Jain merchant Jija (figure 14). The Kirti Stambha, in turn, seems partially based on commemorative pillars, and *dipa-stambha*, and architectural features of the Malwa and Gujarat Sultanates.

Given that in Mandan's age there already existed a common working tradition (shared with neighbouring regions), and that his numerous contemporaries apparently worked in the same style and tradition as described in Mandan's several treatises, the question why he composed so many texts on different facets of construction becomes debatable. One may stress that his texts do not seem intended for the uninitiated, since various basic aspects are skipped over, an example being whether a particular statue was to be sculpted in a standing or seated pose. Moreover, most architects worked from acquired knowledge, rather than from texts written in Sanskrit, a language not every artisan knew. Thus, Mandan's motives for penning not one but half a dozen texts on architecture remain enigmatic.

One reason may well have been the immense amount of construction and renovation across Mewar during the reign of Kumbha. This required the simultaneous deployment of a greater number of artisans, architects, and sculptors than had been the case in preceding decades. However, all of them were expected to work within the framework of an accepted, normally orally transmitted, guideline. In such a scenario, Mandan's texts may have provided various master-architects and supervisors, occupied on various temples, forts, palaces, or even reservoirs, in different areas of the realm, with a set of comprehensive textual guides. The contents of these could have been shared with masons, artisans, and junior architects, even if they could not read the instructions personally. Texts like Mandan's thus ensured that the buildings or idols followed the scale, imagery, and other architecture-related conventions throughout the land.

Possibly Mandan had no pretensions regarding his own status in relation to his contemporaries; nor was he totally orthodox in his approach to novelty, for he concluded his *Prasada Mandan* by stating that there were many other treatises on architecture which also ought to be seen by the wise. He compared this reference to other texts with the analogy of a single jewel, lustrous in its own right, which can become outstanding when combined with some different material that complements and sets off its beauty to perfection!

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MANDALA BY DESIGN

The Courtyard of a Haveli Temple in Jaipur

Vibhuti Sachdev

To win a battle over evil, the gods created a giant of immense strength and size, Purusha. But having accomplished the task of destroying the demons, the giant continued to destroy everything that came in his way, including the world of the gods. He had to be contained, ordered, and bound, and his strength harnessed; and because his power surpassed even theirs, all the gods decided to join forces to keep him pressed to the earth. Brahma, the divine creator, positioned himself in the centre, and with several other divinities around him, pushed this mighty being of limitless spread, into the ordered field of a mandala. Purusha succumbed to the pressure not only because the unified strength of the gods outweighed his own, but also because he liked his new role. He was now the *rupa* or form of the Vastu Purusha Mandala, the word *vastu* signifying any consecrated space. He had thus become the only catalyst through which man's desires to create space could be realized.

The Vastu Purusha Mandala is a schematic mental map and the basis for rationalizing any site. It is not a measured drawing or a contour map, but a code which enables a reading of the site and a resolution of its design. A piece of land, once assigned to a dwelling, becomes the mandala within which the world of man is organized. Its features become the features of the mandala, which in turn adopts its shape and terrain. The concept of the Vastu Purusha Mandala acts through a site, without which it remains physically non-existent: an ordered field cannot exist without a field. The Vastu Purusha Mandala would be as incomplete without consecrated land, as a site would be without its defining mandala.

The principle of the Vastu Purusha Mandala is a design tool central to India's traditional architectural system, known as Vastu Vidya, encapsulating much of what is essential to the

Indian approach to design. This essay will explore the ideas underlying the design tool, both conceptual and practical. The nature and role of the Vastu Purusha Mandala in architectural design will be demonstrated, using as an example the courtyard of a haveli temple in Jaipur.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE DESIGN TOOL

The textual description of the Vastu Purusha Mandala commences with its simplest form as a square. Each side of the square is devoted to one of the four cardinal directions and ruled by its individual guardian deity. The rising and the setting sun that define time, in Indian thought, also define space. Any enclosure of space therefore should address the four cardinal points. These, along with the four intermediary directions, have further associations with the planets and stars as in astrology, and with the human body as in ayurveda. One form that delivers equal sides to the four cardinals, and equally addresses the intermediate directions, whilst enclosing a space, is a square. But then, why not a regular octagon? The concept of interconnectedness of the micro and macro is intrinsic to the idea of creation, and its physical representation, and the square has the additional property of being divisible into smaller squares, which is not possible with an octagon. Hence the square is preferable.

On facing the rising sun, with the west behind, the south to one's right, and north to the left, one sets the two axes that connect front and rear, and right and left, positioning Man in the centre of the universe. The centrality of Brahma and the connectedness of micro and macro are ideas well established in the Upanishads:

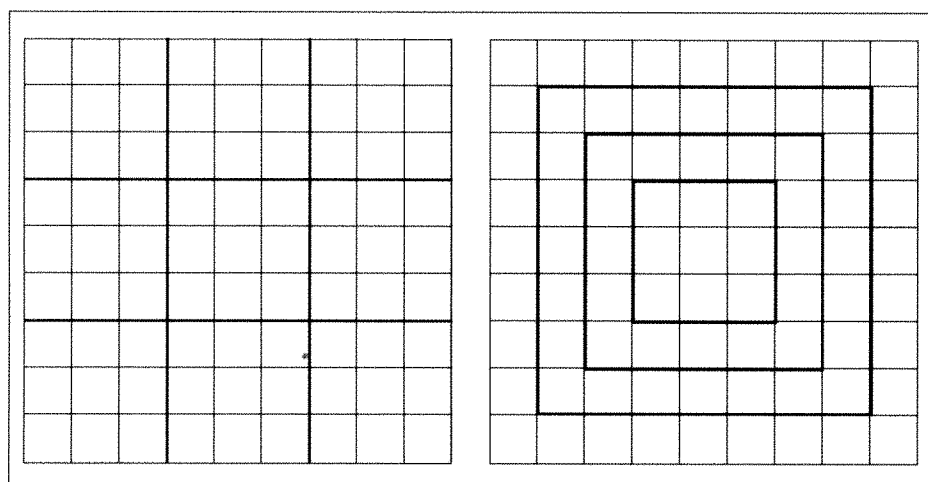
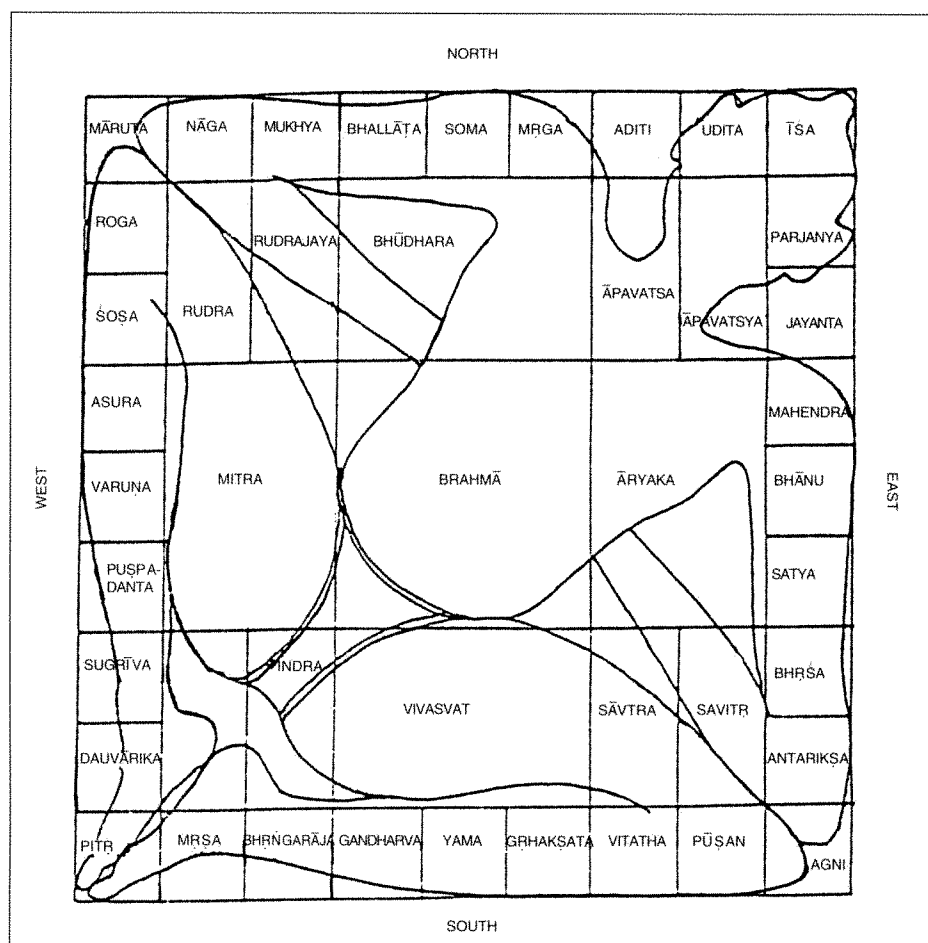
In me alone originates the All, in me the All is established, in me all things come to rest. I am that Brahman without the second! (*Kaivalya Upanishad XIX*)

Meditating on the heart-lotus in the centre, which is free from passion, pure, inconceivable, beyond sorrow, unthinkable, unmanifest, of eternal form, benevolent, peaceful, immortal, the source of Brahma. (*Kaivalya Upanishad VI*)

The earth is the honey of all beings, and all beings are honey for the earth. He who is the resplendent, immortal Person in the earth and who, with reference to oneself, is the resplendent, immortal Person in the body, he indeed is that which is the *atman*, the immortal, Brahman, the All. (*Brihad Aryanyaka Upanishad II.5.1*)

What holds the sides of the man-made construct together is its creator, the Man in the centre; just as the cosmic world is both created and held together by Brahma. Therefore, the four sides of the mandala are held together by its centre, the *madhya bindu* of its generation.

A square with the two axes marked generates a four-square mandala. The next mandala has nine squares: the central square of Brahma, and one each for the four cardinals and the four intermediary directions. The eight peripheral plots of the nine-square mandala are allocated to the ruling divinities of the principal directions. The 64- and the 81-square mandala are generated on the basic principle of the nine-square mandala, with the latter being an exact representation of the nine squares (figure 1). The description of the mandala in the texts commences with the allocation of the central plots to Brahma, then proceeds to the intermediate zone of divinities, and finally to the peripheral deities. The mind traverses spirally outwards, in two or three zones, allocating plots to the divinities following a circumambulatory path. The description and the pattern of allocation of plots on the mandala permit this dual perception of the mandala both as a mesh of squares, and simultaneously as



concentric rings or *vithis* (figure 2).

In the Paramashayika Mandala, the central nine plots (figure 1) become the central courtyard of a house. The size of the central zone is proportional to the size of the mandala, and any change in the size of one entails a change in the other. Indeed, a change in the size of any plot will change the size of all other plots and consequently the size of the mandala. All sizes and dimensions of the mandala are interrelated, proportionally and conceptually, to act as one.

A primary text relevant to the present study is the *Vasturajavallabha* by Mandan Sutradhar of the 15th century, still in use in Rajasthan by craftsmen and traditional builders. In form and

1
81-square
Vastu Purusha Mandala.

2
Two ways of seeing
the mandala: as a mesh
(left) and as concentric
zones (right).

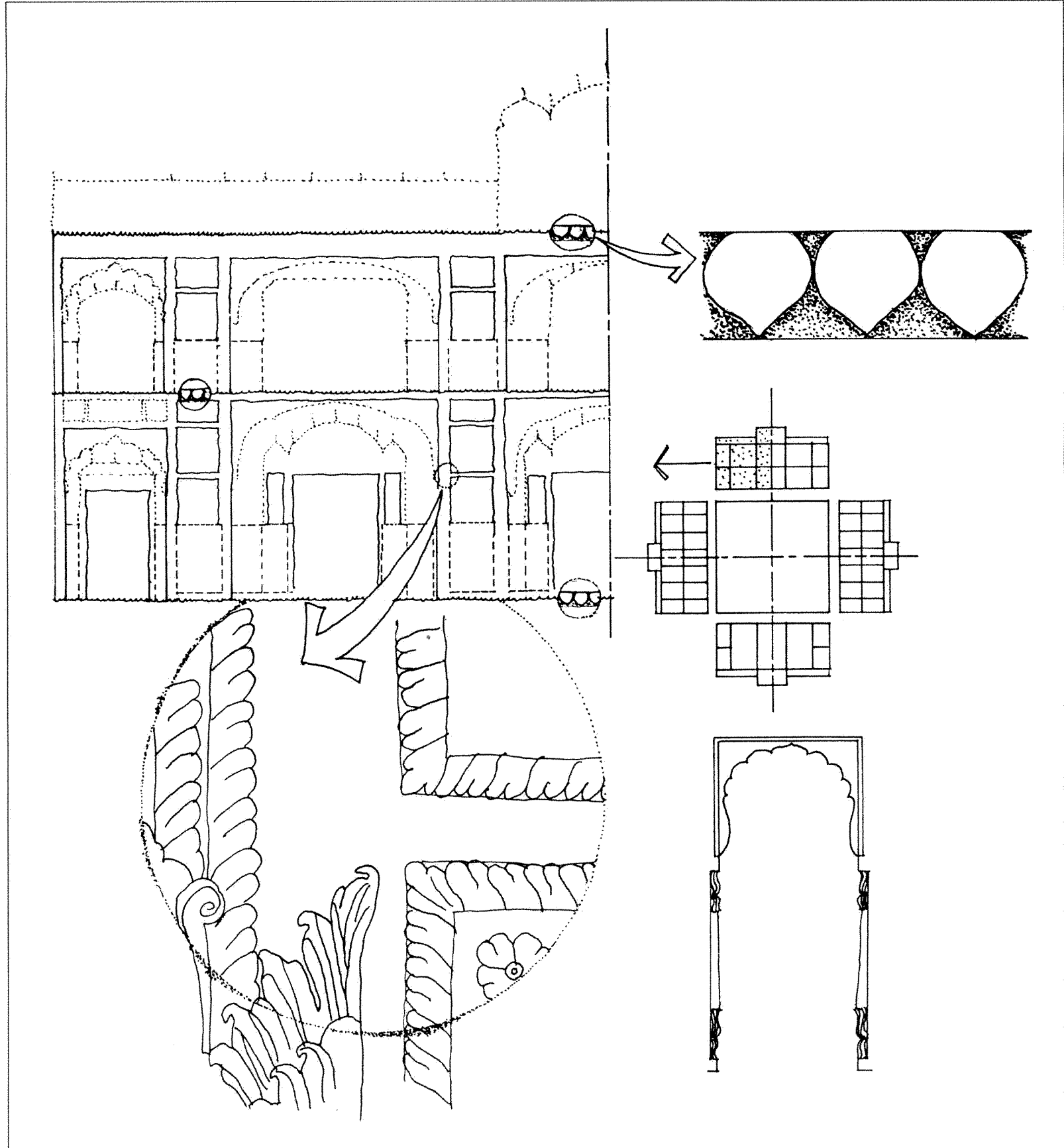
3

Ramachandra Mandir, Jaipur. Part elevation, showing the positions (and enlarged details) of the *galat* and *pohchi*.

content this is similar to the older texts such as the *Mayamata* and the *Manasara*. A craftsman's manual *Vishvakarma Darpan*, published in 1969 in three languages (Hindi, Urdu, and Gurmukhi) is a valuable source for understanding the geometric construction of various features of the building. The terminology used in this manual matches the vocabulary still used by craftsmen in

Jaipur, and has been adopted in the following analysis of the building. The building concerned is a mid-19th-century temple in Jaipur called the Ramachandra Mandir, standing within a complex that also houses the well-known Sanskrit college. The articulation of its courtyard is our chief focus.

The key uses of the concept of the mandala, described above, are marking the boundary;

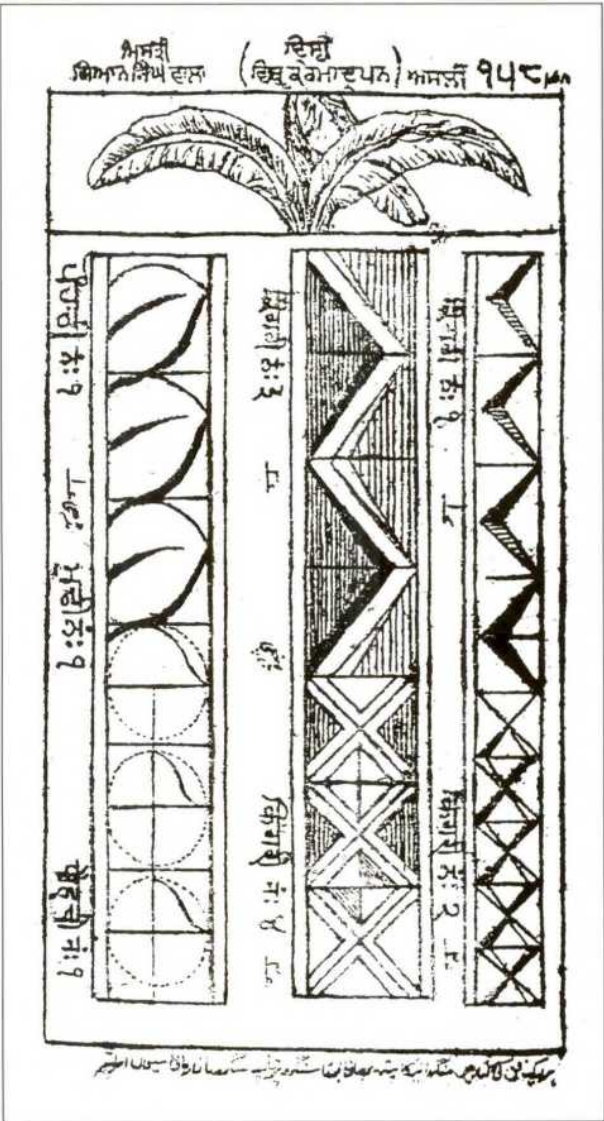


establishing centrality and axes; the representation of layering; and the language of sequence in pattern and dimension.

BOUNDARY

Space is defined on both the horizontal and the vertical plane by marking its boundary. Each plane that constitutes a defined space is treated individually, and in conjunction with its adjoining planes. Each wall of a room, for example, is treated as a separate entity as a plane, and as a part of the room, just as a room is both a separate and a constituent entity of a building. The design challenge lies in the resolution of the spatial and decorative treatment of particular junctions, where the plane turns from the horizontal to the vertical; longitudinal to the transversal. First, let us observe some of the markers used to define space.

The building is set on a plinth marked by a *pohchi* or lower border of a string of petals (figures 3–5). This motif is applied on all floors, marking the boundary on all levels (figures 6 and 9). A shallow convex-concave moulding called *galat* surrounds all niches and openings (figure 3). The characteristic pattern of the *galat*, whether for a niche or an arch, is of radiating leaves, but it is sometimes a plain band (figure 7). The shapes and the proportions of niches and arches are geometrically worked out within the frame of the *galat*.



4
Illustration of a *pohchi* (left) from the *Vishvakarma Darpan*.



5
The *pohchi* of the Ramachandra Mandir.



6
A corner of the courtyard with the *pohchi* on all floors, turning with the plane.

7
The framing of niches, arches, and openings.



CENTRALITY AND AXES

The courtyard is surrounded by two pairs of opposite facades which echo each other in design, creating a dialogue between the facing walls. This concept of *vedha* or *takabandi* is carefully pursued by ensuring that each element of the facade is visually “answered” by a similar or complementary feature directly opposite; and by maintaining the primary axes in the division of the facades. Each side of the courtyard is subdivided into an odd number of elements. The west- and the east-facing sides (figures 8, 10, and 11) each have three main divisions, flanked by two smaller portions; the north- and the south-facing sides (figure 12) have five main divisions, flanked by the same two smaller portions: thus also achieving a resolution of the corners between the two planes (figure 6). An odd-numbered subdivision places the emphasis on the central element. Each subdivision too is designed along its own central axis (figure 8). The central division, as a rule, is larger than the adjoining divisions even if only by an *angula* (circa 2 cm). On the lower floor of the western side, although all three main subdivisions have the same pattern – a *bangaldar* roof with domed *chhatris* on either side in relief – the central opening, which is the main entrance to the courtyard, is significantly larger than the other two. The raised *munavat* work below the curve of the *bangaldar* of the main opening is more intricate in decoration (as compared to the recessed decoration of the other two) with peacocks, flowers, and vases; the

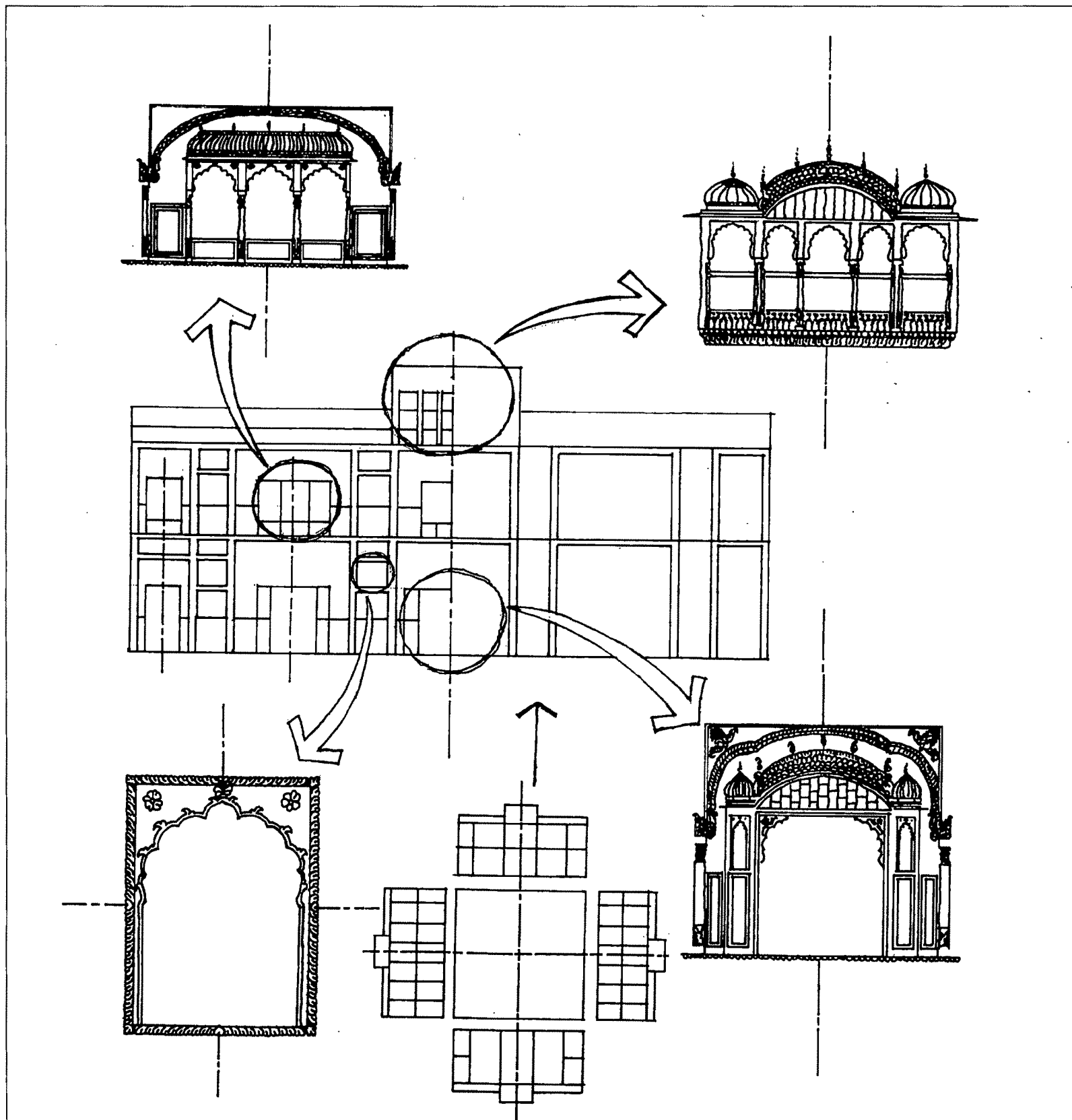
horizontal bands follow a rhythm to obtain a central box – a perfect place for an auspicious image of Ganesh.

Together the four facades, with marked and often enhanced central features, set the two central axes that intersect at the *brahmasthana*. A module of a pavilion, comprising a *bangaldar* roof unit with a *gumbaj* or domed *chhatris* on either side (figure 8, top), sits over each of the central divisions of the four facades. The *bangaldar* roof

unit is further subdivided into three arched sections, with the central arch marginally wider than the other two. This re-marks the central axis not only of the *bangaldar* unit, but of the module and the whole of the facade as well. Also at the roof level, in the corners of the courtyard, are further domed *chhatris* marking the ends of each side (figures 9 and 10).

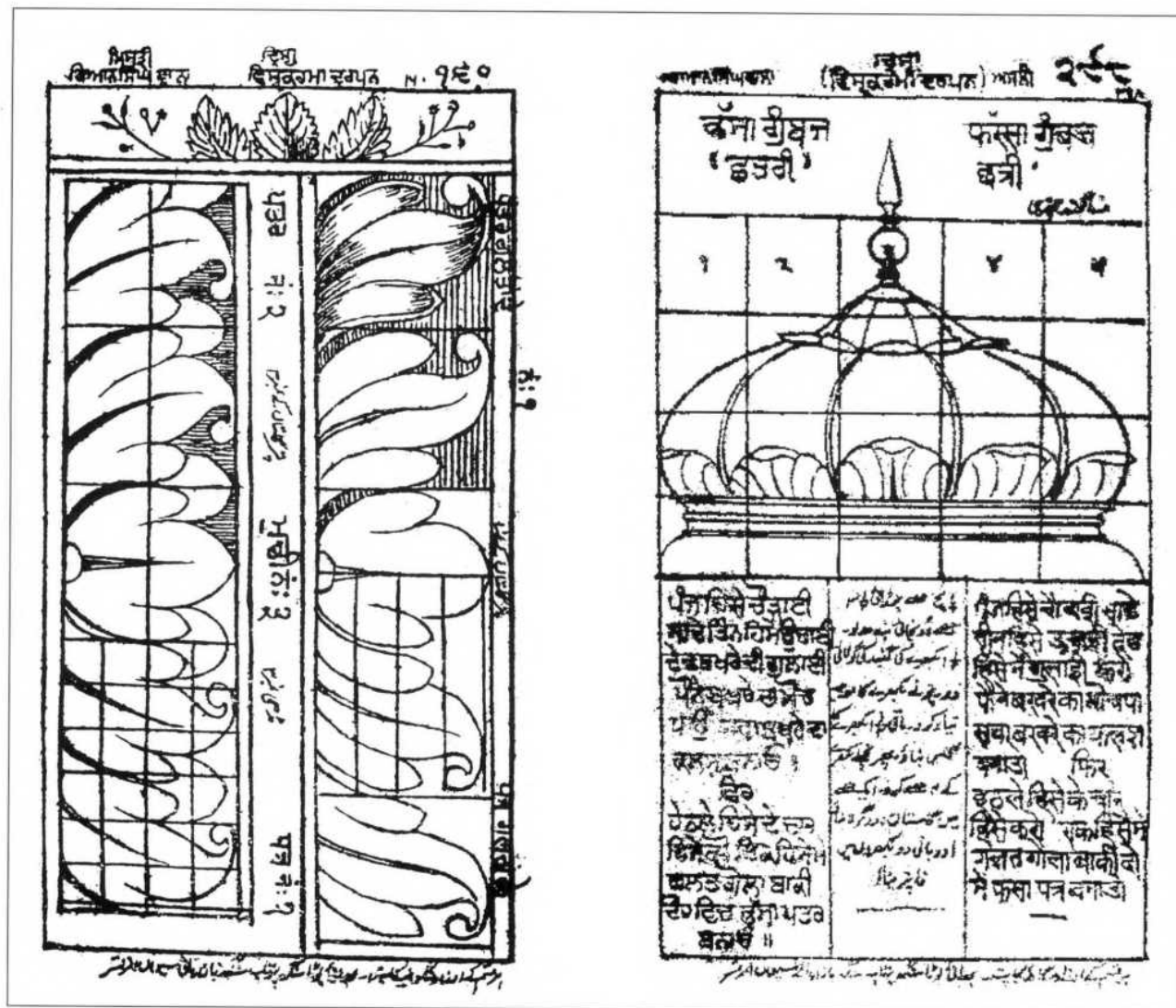
The centrality of the courtyard is established not only by its inherent function as an open

8
Diagram of the western side of the courtyard, with enlarged details of modules.



9

Illustrations of the radiating leaves of a galat; and the construction of a domed chhatri, from the Vishvakarma Darpan.



10

The western side of the courtyard.





11
The eastern side of
the courtyard.



12
The northern side of
the courtyard, which is
similar to the southern
side.

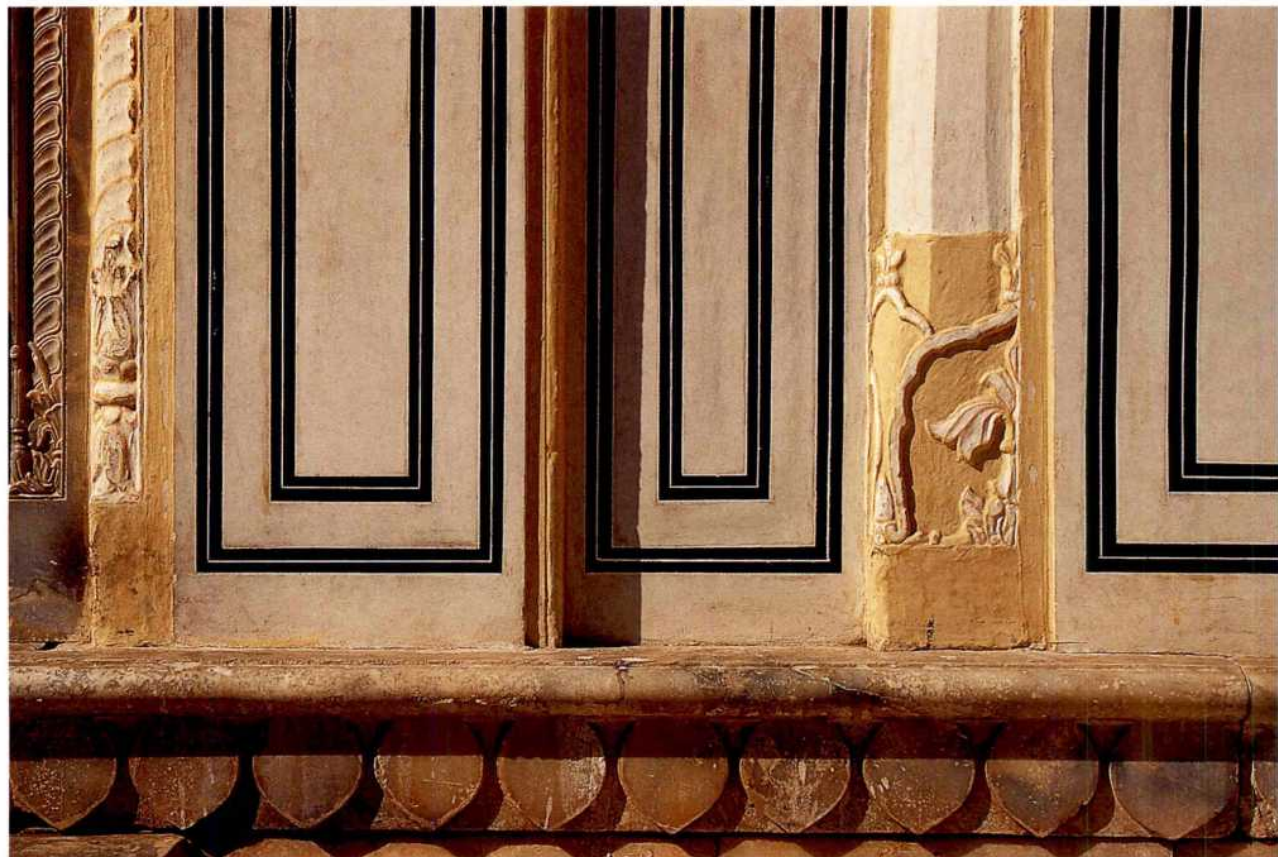
space, but also by the sides that enclose it. The echo that is set up between the opposite sides in terms of their divisions and decorative features, the odd number of subdivisions, and the decorative and dimensional enhancement of the central division, are all visual expressions of the concept of centrality. And because each side is connected conceptually with the opposite side, the centrality established on the facades is stretched into a central axis. The two central axes intersect at the centre point of the courtyard (figure 8). This concept of centrality and axes is followed even at the micro level in the definition of a niche, for example. The frame that defines the niche is marked by a *galat* of radiating leaves that change their inclination at the central points of the sides of the frame (figure 9). The axes are established by the points on the sides where the leaves inclined towards opposite directions meet.

LAYERING

Beyond the sides that make the courtyard lie the covered layers of the building, such as an arcade followed by another arcade, or by a fully covered range of rooms. The layering may be physical in terms of actual spaces, or it may be conceptual in terms of a sculpted representation of the layers beyond. In the interior of a room and on the courtyard walls of traditional buildings, it is

common to find a *khat* or dado panel that runs all along the surface of the wall at a level of about three feet from the floor (figure 13). The characteristic feature of a dado panel is that it is finished with an impervious plaster called *araish*, which makes it suitable for use with low furniture and to lean against. It is usually framed with bold black borders, which may be floral and colourful or plain. The panel itself is in plain white *araish*, but may be decorated. In a traditional setting, the surface of the dado panel is in contact with the human body and is considered the most important surface in the rendering of the walls. All features immediately above the panel conceptually recede behind it.

On the western wall of the temple courtyard, for example, the columns of niches recede behind the dado panel (figures 7 and 15, bottom). This is evident in the way the *galat* of the niche immediately above the panel is articulated: it has no lower border framing the niche, suggesting its continuation; and the radiating leaves do not change their angle of inclination, suggesting that the centre points of the sides lie hidden behind the *khat*. On either side of the niches are the columns that have split apart and made way for the niches to emerge to the foreground. This constitutes the next layer of panels, framed by columns that were whole

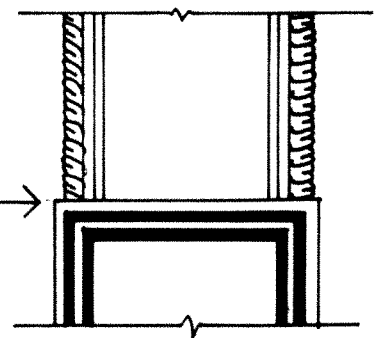
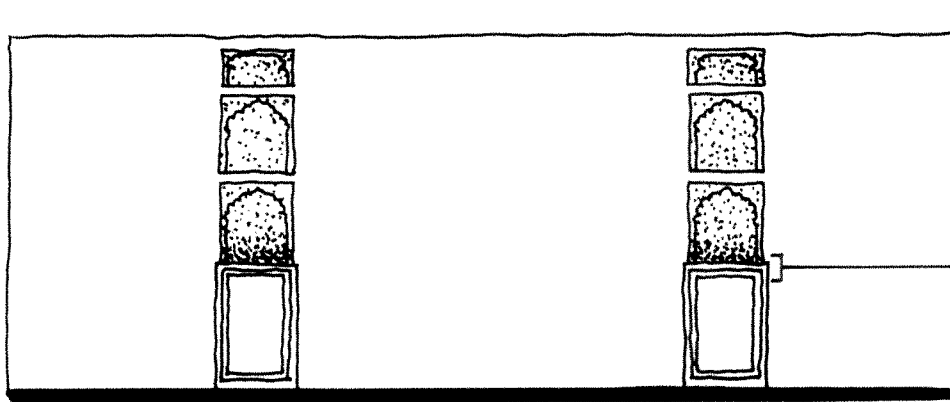
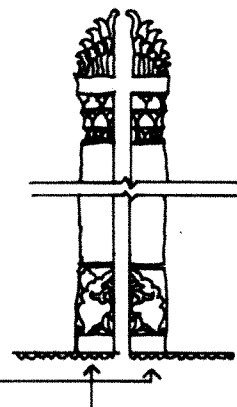
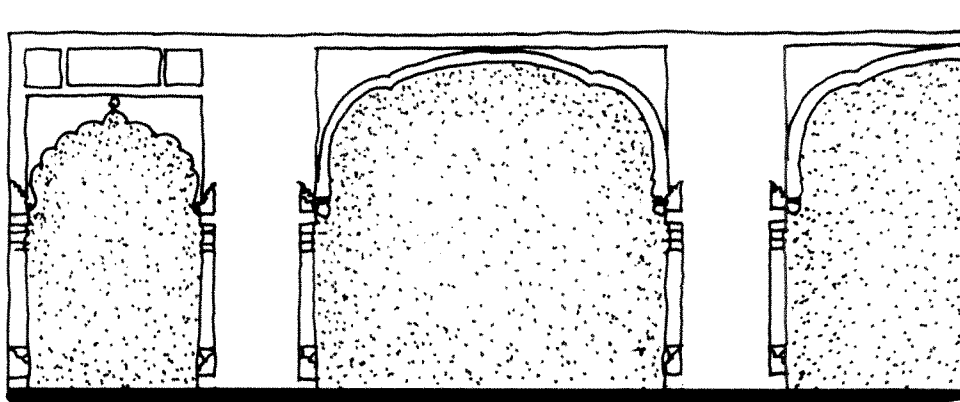
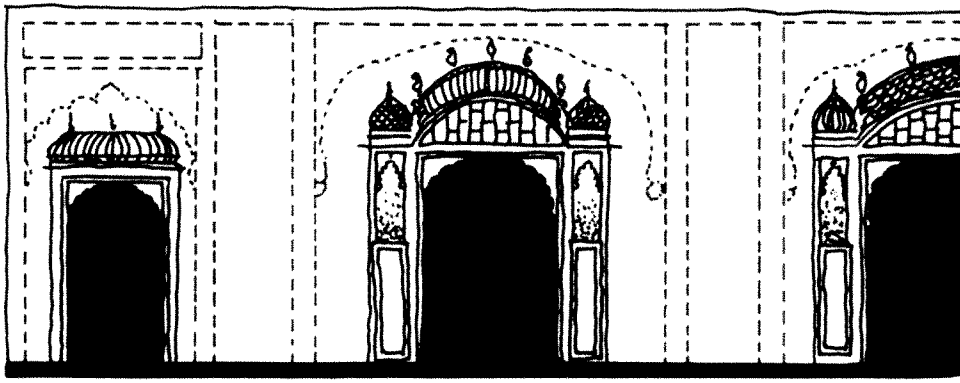


13
Detail of *khat* or dado
panels.



14
Columns receding
behind the *khat*.

15
The layers of an
elevation: the openings
are framed by panels
(top) which are
themselves contained in
larger panels (centre),
over which in turn are
superimposed columns
of niches, with the dado
panels pasted over them
(bottom).

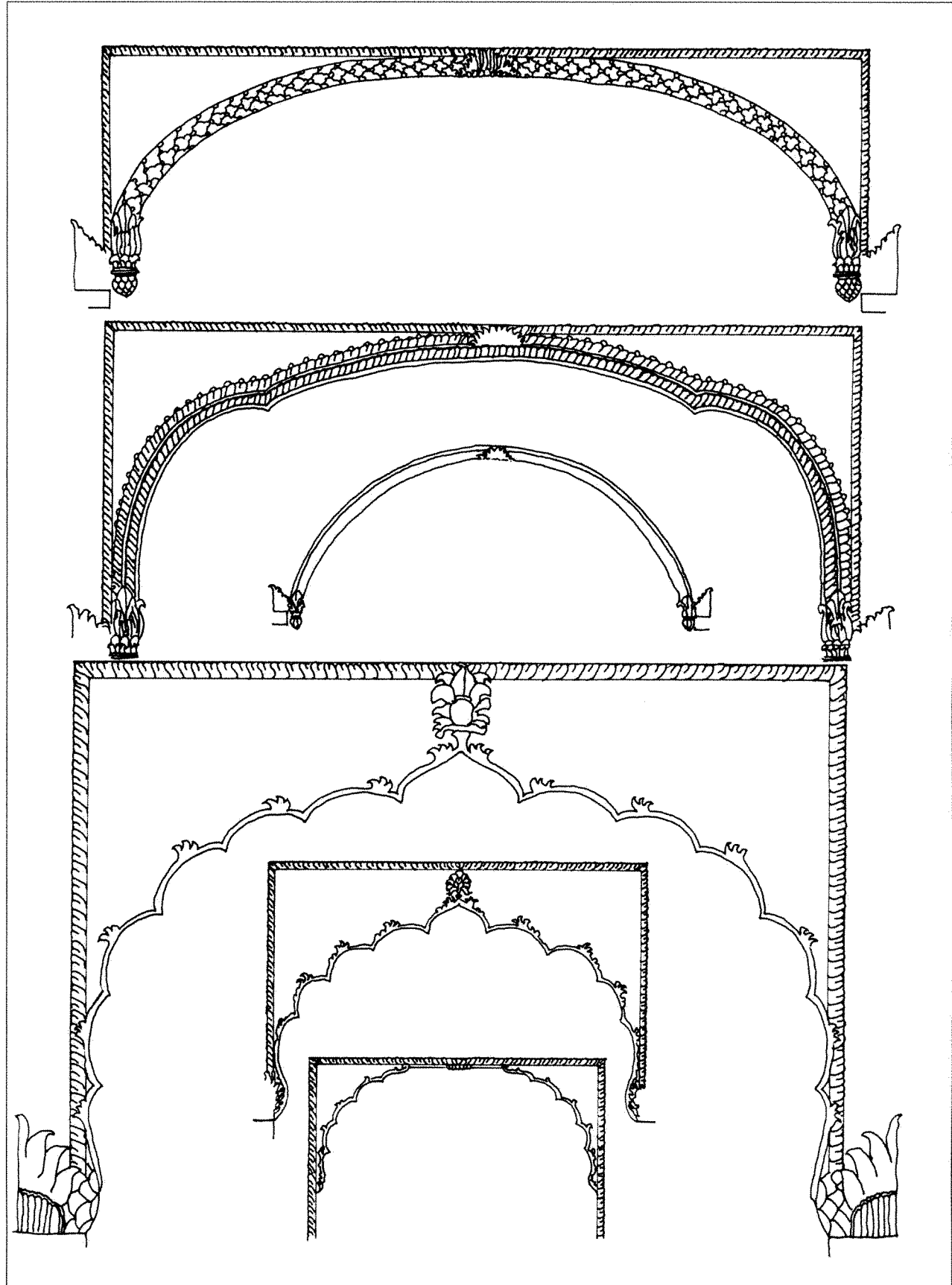


(figure 15, centre). Proceeding through the facade is the third layer of panels that frame the openings (top).

Another common example of the articulation of layering is the case of vanishing columns. Beyond the arcade, on the inner walls of the north- and south-facing halls, is a depiction of arches and columns in relief. The columns terminate without

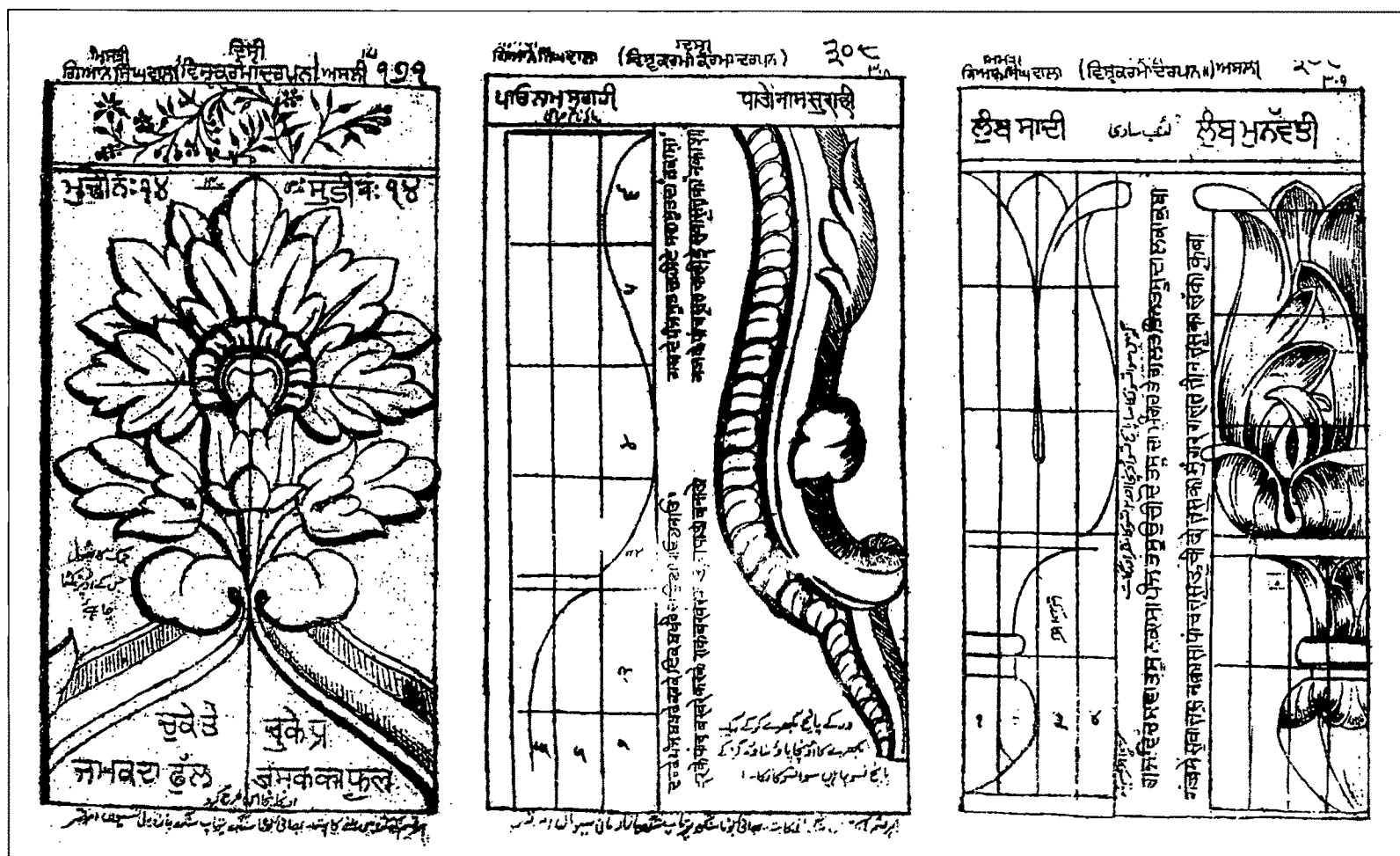
touching the floor at the point where they meet the dado panel, to suggest their continuation behind the panel (figure 14). The central niche on the same wall is similarly devoid of its lower border to suggest a layer beyond the panel.

Layering of all these kinds suggests a series of concentric zones, like the *vithis* of the mandala, radiating from the centre.



16

Diagram showing types of arches. From top to bottom: *kamani* arch within its *galat*; a double-curved arch; a circular arch; a cusped arch with five *bangris*; a cusped arch with three *bangris*; and a split arch with three *bangris*.



SEQUENCE AND PATTERN

The building is united by an overall concept that remains consistent throughout. The uniformity in design of architectural features like columns is sustained even with a change of materials. Whether they are structural, in relief, or partially depicted, they are fully consistent in their design. Usually, every building has an overriding design concept which is exclusively its own. The Ramachandra temple uses a variety of *chhatri* or roof types: *kamani* (bow) or *bangaldar* roofs in relief and on pavilions on the roof; *gumbaj* or domed roofs in relief and on the roof; and *vedi chhatri* or flattened roofs in relief. A *bangaldar* roof, when not flanked on either side by domed *chhatris*, is accompanied by a circular arch (figures 10 and 12, upper floor of the facades).

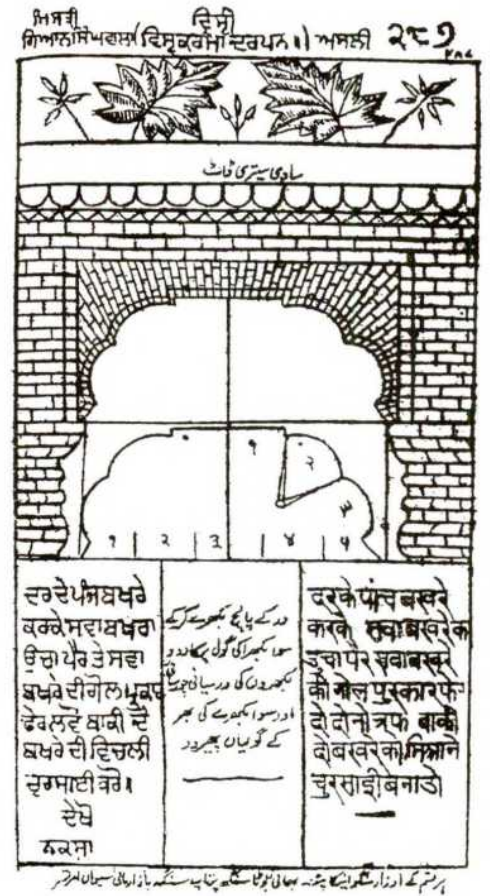
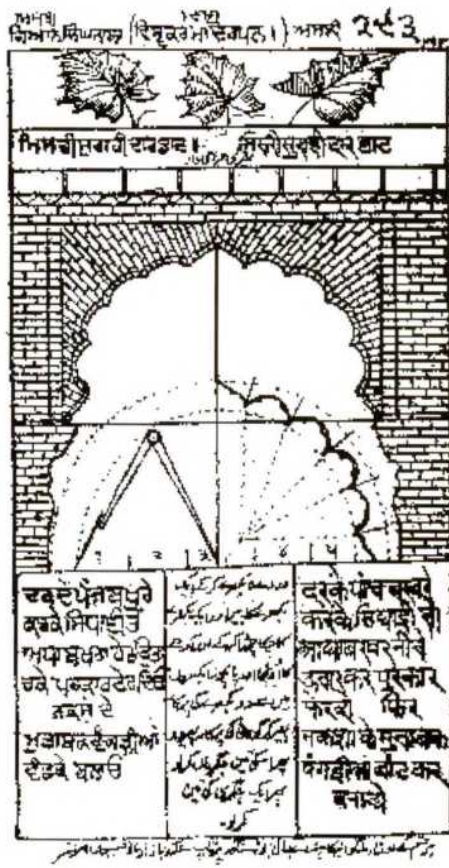
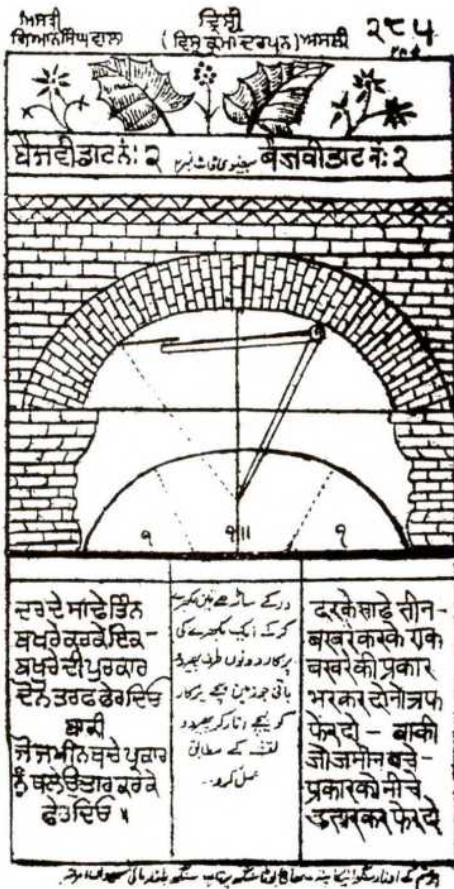
A cusped arch used throughout the building comprises three elements: a *chugga* or the central, upward-turning cusp, usually topped by a flower; *bangri* or intermediary curves, usually odd in number, on either side of the *chugga*; and a *goda* or knee where the arch meets the top of the column (figures 16–18). The proportion of the individual elements is geometrically constructed within the rectangle between the *galat* and the invisible line joining the tops of the

columns. The courtyard also uses a series of circular arches like the *kamani* or bow arch, a double-curved arch, and a circular arch (figure 16). Note the characteristic *goda* (figure 17, right) and the flower of the *chugga* employed in these circular arches. All arches, irrespective of their shapes, are geometrically derived from their encasing rectangle. Even in what seems a simple case of splitting the arch along its central cusp, the proportions of the split *chugga*, *bangris* and *goda* are geometrically derived from the encasing rectangle (figures 16, bottom; 18, right; and 19). The width is divided into five parts, of which two parts are horizontal on either side of the centre, so that the length of the horizontal element of the arch is directly proportional to the width of the opening. All features follow a consistent proportioning system. For example, the shafts of columns are twice their bases in height; the height of openings is one and a half times or twice the width; and the height of the upper floor is a twelfth shorter than the lower floor.

THEORY IN PRACTICE

The design of traditional buildings follows a system comprising rules and methods. An understanding of the method helps in a correct

17
Illustrations of a flower of a *chugga*; the foot or the knee of an arch; and the foot of a circular arch, from the Vishvakarma Darpan.



18
Illustration describing the construction of a circular arch; of a cusped arch; and of a split arch, from the *Vishvakarma Darpan*.

19
The split arch on the western side of the courtyard.



reading of the design and enriches the experience of the architectural ambience. While it is possible to marvel at the dexterity and skill employed in producing the intricate designs without having an understanding of their underlying system, a knowledge of the theory of architecture remains an essential key to the mind of the designer, to his innovations, and to the subtle nuances of the design; and it helps us distinguish a well-resolved design from a weak one. A crucial aspect of this use of theory for the study of design concerns how it was originally applied. The theory of Indian architecture or Vastu Vidya is not a set of by-laws used to pass or fail designs; neither is it based on one building against which all the rest are to be judged, or on the final word of one builder or craftsman declaring his verdict. It is an assimilation of all three. The tradition of architectural knowledge or Vastu Vidya is built jointly on a body of texts or Vastu Shastras; on the body of buildings or Vastu Kala; and on the body of practitioners, the craftsmen, and the designers – the experts in the science of building – the Vastukars. All three dimensions of the knowledge work in unison, challenging each other, pushing the boundaries while retaining the efficacy of the system.

One design tool central to traditional architecture, including in Rajasthan, is the Vastu Purusha Mandala. In the past it has been used by historians as a geometric grid to be superimposed over a plan of a building to judge whether it follows Vastu Vidya; or as a magic diagram that imparts esoteric symbolism to the building; and, most often, along with the entire body of Vastu Vidya, as some tedious aspect of Indian tradition that has no relation to architecture whatsoever. In the above discussion the courtyard of a haveli temple in Jaipur is analysed using the fundamental principles of the Vastu Purusha Mandala, in order to demonstrate how an assimilation of even one aspect of the theory of architecture can unleash communication with the building, and can transform our reading of it.

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NOTE

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PALACES OF THE RAJPUT KINGS

Giles Tillotson

Chand Bardai, a court poet of the 12th century, tells the tale of how the forest sages assembled on the top of Mount Abu and created a fire, from which, through divine intervention, there emerged four great warriors, equipped to fight in the defence of Brahmanism. These four were the prototypes, the progenitors of the Rajput clans which for so long dominated north Indian polity. This legend of origin is open to a variety of modern interpretations. Perhaps it describes an actual ritual event by which certain warlike clans were admitted into the Hindu fold, an early episode in the long-running contract between priestly and warrior castes, through which they divided spiritual and temporal authority between them. Equally, the legend might have served to substantiate the claim of divine descent made by many Rajput leaders, including Chand Bardai's patron, the great Prithviraj III of Delhi. What is certain is that, wherever they came from, the Rajputs emerged as the principal power-brokers in north India from the 7th century onwards, and their armies were to form the main forces of resistance against the successive waves of Islamic invasion.

In the medieval period, the pre-eminent clans included the Solankis of Gujarat, the Chauhans of Delhi, the Pratiharas of Gwalior, and the Chandellas of Khajuraho. As patrons, they were responsible for great temple complexes, and although some – notably those in Delhi – became the targets of zealous iconoclasm, others survive and are amongst the most celebrated examples of Hindu sacred architecture. From literary and archaeological evidence it is apparent that at this time the Rajput kings built palaces too, but of these no trace remains, partly perhaps because they were constructed of perishable materials, but more especially because there was less concern to preserve the houses of kings than those of gods. We can know of these early Rajput courts only

from inscriptions, and from the poetic writings of the likes of Chand Bardai.

When Prithviraj lost the cities of Delhi and Ajmer to the forces of Muhammad of Ghur in 1193, a new element entered the political stage. The establishment and rapid spread of Muslim power in northern India diminished that of the Rajputs, effectively restricting them to the western region roughly corresponding to the modern state named after them, Rajasthan. To be sure, some Rajput clans had long been established here, notably the Guhilots (later Sisodias) who controlled Nagda and the great hill fort at Chittor. Others were pushed into it: the Bhattis and the Rathors, for example, established themselves in the unpromising desert terrains of Jaisalmer and Pali (later Jodhpur), and the Harachauhans wrested control of the more fertile southern region around Bundi, taking it from local tribals. These and other clans established a cluster of neighbouring states over an area bordered by the Thar desert on the west and north, and the sultanates of Delhi, Malwa, and Gujarat to the east and south, and with the Aravali hills serving as a spinal cord.

The code of valour and of honour that was sustained by the courts of these states has become almost a cliché of Indian history: modern historians no less than the contemporary bards tell tales of the men's recklessness in battle and of self-sacrifice by the women. The legend grows with each telling; but it is undeniable that Rajput culture was dominated by a military aristocracy who esteemed personal dignity and individual bravery above all else.

In 1526, the invasion of Babar, first of the Mughal dynasty, briefly deflected the warring Rajput states from internecine conflict, but the confederacy under the Sisodia Rana Sanga was soon defeated. By the 1560s, during the reign of Akbar, most of the states had been subdued, and

they were regarded by the Mughals as forming merely a province of their increasing empire. But through diplomacy and intermarriage, the Rajput rulers established treaties with the new paramount power, which left their borders and internal authority intact. Indeed, once assured of this domestic autonomy and religious tolerance, many of the maharajas willingly served the successive Mughal emperors as regional governors and military commanders, regarding the empire as a source of stability. Border disputes, transfers of capitals, and internal fragmentations continuously redrew the map of the Rajput states, but their individual identities survived. In later centuries comparable terms were negotiated with the East India Company and the British Crown, ensuring the further survival of the states, until they were eventually dissolved in 1949 to form a unified state of the newly independent India.

Throughout this protracted period of semi-subservience, the Rajput rulers flourished as patrons – of temples, naturally; but even more so of palace architecture. Whether this emphasis offered some consolation for the lessening of real power – and certainly it was facilitated by the imposition of a higher imperial order – it created at least a display of magnificent grandeur. The palaces from the period of British hegemony reflect the eclecticism and rapidly changing lifestyles of that era; but those built earlier, roughly between the mid-15th and mid-18th centuries, represent something distinct and homogeneous: an architectural style of sophistication, beauty, and imagination.

THE WORKING PALACE

Palaces can serve a variety of functions, from the public and ceremonial to the private and domestic. The earliest surviving Rajput palaces, such as those at Chittor and Gwalior, had a more



restricted use, being essentially private royal abodes, with the public functions of the raja kept to the margins or the exterior (figure 1). The indigenous tradition of the seclusion of women was conceived as a protection from a public more than a male gaze, so that as long as the palace remained a sanctuary, no internal division of male and female domains was required. But from the mid-16th century onwards, public events were increasingly introduced into the heart of the palace complex, and this necessitated the creation of a distinct female zone, the *ravala* or *zenana*. In the later palaces, like that at Jodhpur, the *zenana*, though joined to the main structure, has its own separate entrance. It consists of one or more courtyards, surrounded by ranges with suites of rooms, affording both communal and individual spaces. Access to these apartments is by corridor-balconies, lit and ventilated by *jali* screens, which provide an ornamental facade to the ranges (figure 2). Small shuttered windows in these *jalis* allowed the women to overlook the courtyards unobserved. A shrine or temple is also a regular feature, helping the *zenana* to operate as a self-sufficient world.

The male domain, or *mardana*, houses a variety of spaces, from the private apartments of the raja to the most public offices. Grandest of all is the hall of audience, for the ceremonial reception of visitors and dignitaries (*darbar*). Originally called *sabha nivas*, such halls tended in the Mughal period to be given the Persian label

1
Chittor: the palace of Rana Ratan Singh II, successor to the great Rana Sanga; built about 1530, amongst the oldest surviving Rajput palaces, along with others in Chittor, Gwalior, and Orchha.



2

Jodhpur: zenana apartments in the southern range of the Moti Mahal Chowk; probably from the 1670s.

diwan-i-am; and one of the finest – that added to the Amber palace by Mirza Raja Jai Singh around 1625 – reportedly aroused the envy of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (figure 3). The more workaday business of conferring with ministers and sitting in assembly with the nobles or thakurs was usually accommodated in a separate, smaller hall, known as the *sarvatobhadra* or *diwan-i-khas*. Other important institutions of the *mardana* include the treasury (*daulat khana*), the armoury (*sileh khana*), and a variety of offices and record stores (*pothi khana*). Decoratively the most sumptuous apartments, though, would be the bedroom, often ornamented with mirrorwork and so called the *shish mahal*; and a painted room or courtyard called the *chitra-shala*, of which the richest example is that at Bundi (figure 4).

The many open courtyards of a Rajput palace do more than introduce light and air into the dense mass of building: no less than the rooms they are important usable spaces. Contemporary

paintings show how a courtyard could serve as a sort of *plein-air* hall of audience; as the site for the celebration of a religious festival such as Holi, Dassehra, or Divali; or for some more relaxing activity, such as watching a dance performance or *nach*. The Badi Mahal courtyard in the Udaipur palace contains a large ornamental tank which served as a swimming pool, where the ruler and his nobles could thrash about, fully clothed, smoking hookahs (figure 5). The small high courtyards at the top of this palace served (like the roofs of the houses in the town below) as open-air bedrooms in the hot weather.

The warm climate reduces the need for enclosure, and many of the palace rooms, whilst affording protection from rain or sun overhead, are open to the sides to admit air. Equally, the courtyards could temporarily be covered by cloth awnings or shamianas, to create an extension of the covered space. The distinction between interior and exterior is thus a blurred one: once

within the palace's imposing outer walls, we move through a succession of partially open and variously enclosed spaces. Such fluidity also means that the size and shape of any given apartment are less defined, as it can be extended or diminished as desired. And if the space is variable, then the function too is less determined, and many of the rooms were intended to be adaptable rather than serving a single, specified purpose. This adaptability was greatly assisted by the style of furnishings, which involved easily movable carpets, bolsters, and screens, with a minimum of large solid furniture. There is nothing architecturally to distinguish a place of leisure, say, from a place for eating; and it is notable that Rajput palaces have no designated banquet halls or dining rooms.

A further reflection of this adaptability is that the private apartments of the palace tend to be named not after some activity (as is a bedroom or a sitting room), but after the patrons who built them; with a suffix such as *vilas*, *nivas*, *mandir*, or *mahal*: terms which suggest respectively retreat, abode, room, or palace, and which can be applied equally to the smallest chamber or to the entire palace complex. Thus, for instance, the sleeping apartment and private retreat added by Maharaja Gaj Singh in the palace of Bikaner in the mid-18th century is known as the Gaj Mandir (figure 6).

This last is further typical of many of the private apartments in its small size. However

lavishly ornamented, they remain personal places where no grandeur of scale is attempted. Similarly no great feature is made of staircases or corridors, whose functions are achieved modestly and economically. Splendour through size is usually reserved for the more public areas, which saw larger assemblies of people.

Each of the former Rajput capitals contains one major palace whose parts and subdivisions are as described. Often this palace served also as a military stronghold: they are either contained within a fort, as at Chittor, Jodhpur, and Jaisalmer; or else are themselves strongly fortified, as at Amber, Udaipur, and Bundi. In addition to

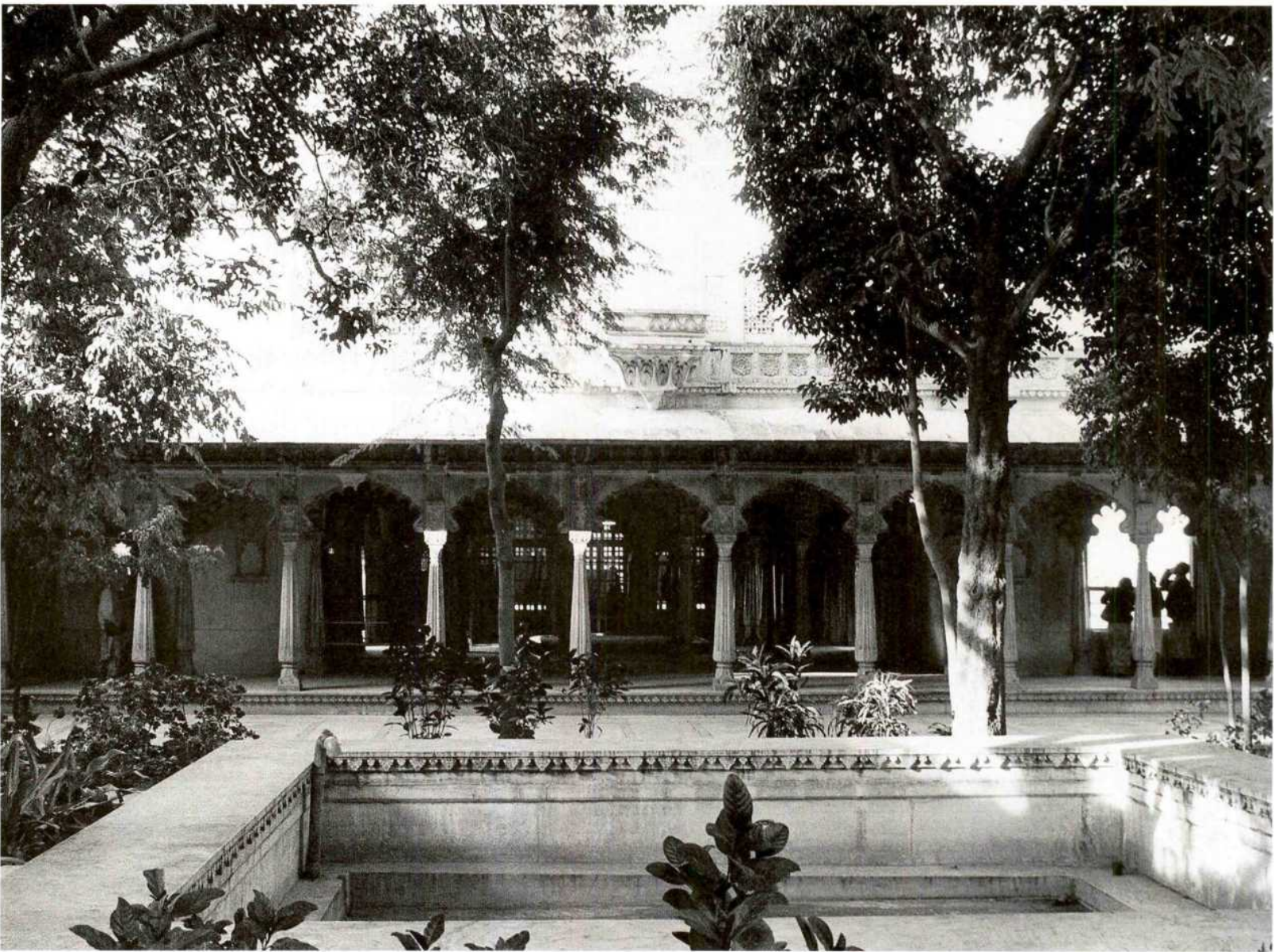
3

Amber: the magnificent *diwan-i-am*; built c. 1625, of red sandstone and cream marble, with "temple-style" columns and corbels.



4

Bundi: the *chitra-shala* (mid-18th century), with the most splendid surviving set of Rajput wall paintings.



5
Udaipur: the Badi Mahal,
or garden palace, added
by Maharana Amar
Singh II around 1700.

6
Bikaner: the Gaj Mandir,
a suite of five
interconnecting chambers
added to the palace in
Junagadh in the mid-18th
century.



these great fortified palaces, Rajput cities commonly contain a number of lesser palaces of various types. Prominent amongst these are buildings devoted wholly to pleasure: walled gardens with pavilions and water features; lakeside resorts for picnicking; and hunting lodges in the forests. Intended for use for only a few hours at a time, such palaces can be insubstantial structures, whilst still displaying all the customary elegance and invention of Rajput design.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS

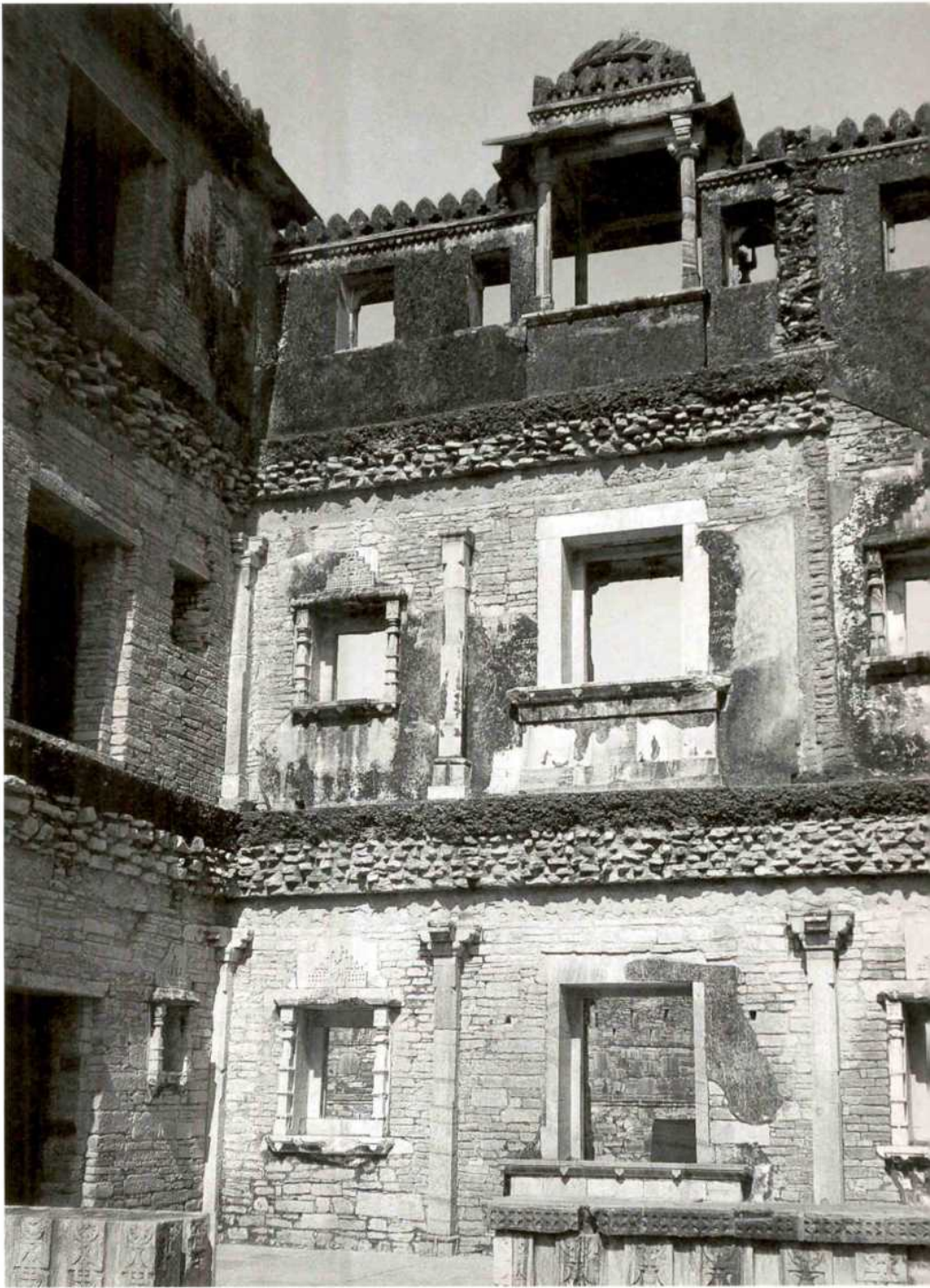
What are the parts or elements employed in the construction of all of these various palaces? Throughout Rajasthan, the principal building material is stone, especially the sandstones and marbles quarried from the Aravalis. Roughly cut blocks and even rubble, faced with plaster and paint, provide the main walls, but the stone is often dressed and intricately carved in the more ornamental parts of the palace. In the older palaces, like those at Chittor (figure 7), the usual type of column is a reduced and simplified version of the standard temple column: less richly carved, it has the same essential form, with a square base, an octagonal or sixteen-sided shaft, and a capital composed of a cluster of corbels. These columns support plain lintels. Other supporting devices are the often elaborate brackets and corbels. These elements are combined to form more complex parts such as the *chhatra* (literally “umbrella”), a small open pavilion of regular geometrical form; and the *jharokha*, a cradle-like balcony which projects from the palace facade. On the interior, mouldings and miniature columns frame a window opening, in a manner reminiscent of the sculptural niche on temple walls, just as the *jharokha* recalls the openings of the temple’s circumambulatory passage (*pradakshina-patha*). The *chajja* or dripstone, a sloping shelf which projects from the wall to shelter it, and the pierced screen or *jali*, are further regular elements. The commonest wall surface is lime plaster or *chunam*.

This is the basic repertoire employed in the palaces which survive from the 15th and 16th centuries. As already implied, it has much in common with temple architecture, both of the same time and earlier periods. The similarities between sacred and secular traditions should not

surprise us, as the same builders were responsible for both; and it suggests that early Rajput palace design was firmly rooted within the broader Hindu building system. But given the differences in function, it is natural that the common elements are used in very different ways in the palaces, where the sense of enclosure and the temples’ dense massing are avoided in favour of more open arrangements and a more economical construction, and where the overall planning is much less consistent.

Another very visible distinction is the incorporation in the palaces of domes and arches – forms which entered only later into temple building and were derived from the architecture of the neighbouring sultanates. The skyline of a

7
Chittor: part of the interior of the palace of Rana Kumbha in the fort (mid-15th century) showing characteristic early Rajput forms.



Rajput palace is dominated by small domes, like those of contemporary Mandu or Delhi. Of course the dome represents not only an aesthetic matter but a principle of engineering, and this too was exploited. For instance, Rana Kumbha's palace at Chittor stands on a great vaulted substructure, and the later Sisodia palace at Udaipur has a vast terrace on its eastern side, also supported by arches. The presence in areas adjacent to the Rajput states of an alternative approach to palace design had the effect of making the Rajputs' builders more open to innovation and experiment. In the courtyards of Rajput palaces, arcades never fully displaced the more traditional column and beam, but they enriched the range of choice; indeed, the two systems were often used in conjunction.

The cusped or foliated arch – more delicate in outline than the severe pointed arch – was one of the innovations which further broadened the repertoire of forms in the course of the 17th century. Another was the curved roof, reminiscent of the thatched hut of rural Bengal and so generally called *bangaldar*. Both are used to magnificent effect in the apartments added to the Amber palace by Mirza Raja Jai Singh I in the 1630s (figure 8). Columns became simpler and

more distinct from the temple type, and were often replaced by unmoulded piers, or by balustered and fluted columns, like those found in the palaces of the emperor Shah Jahan.

In general, too, these changes show that Rajasthani builders were keeping pace with Mughal design, and some writers have been tempted to interpret this as the provincial courts seeking to emulate the imperial one. Such an interpretation misreads the relationship somewhat: it should be remembered that Mughal architecture itself was always eclectic and experimental, and that the crucial new elements – such as the cusped arch and *bangaldar* roof – had Indian, not Islamic, antecedents. It was through a mutual process of interaction that the two schools developed alongside each other, sharing ideas and even craftsmen, but for the most part each retaining a distinct and strong aesthetic.

The idiosyncratic Rajasthani approach is particularly marked in the manner in which the common forms were developed in many of the additions and new palaces of the 18th century. The *bangaldar* roof was compressed and exaggerated till it came to be merely a semicircular *chajja*. The cusped arch had rarely

8

Amber: the central court of the palace, with Jai Singh's Jai Mandir (1630s) overlooking an ornamental garden.





been a structural element (more often being made up of brackets fitted under a lintel), and now a reduction in size and proliferation in number turned it into a purely decorative frill. The *jharokha* received a similar treatment: no longer a balcony to sit in, it became part of an ornamental facade. These developments were pursued enthusiastically in the desert states such as Jaisalmer, where these components make up screen-like facades to afford protection against the hot dusty winds, and where the diminutive structures indicate greatly enhanced skills in stone carving (figure 9). But perhaps the most extravagant example of this approach is the much celebrated Hawa Mahal, added to the Jaipur palace in 1799 (figure 10).

THE RAJPUT AESTHETIC

Many of the individual forms or components which together make up what we might call the vocabulary of Rajput palace design, as described,

are common to other kinds of buildings, such as Mughal palaces and Hindu temples. What justifies describing the palaces as nevertheless embodying a distinct and homogeneous style is the unique manner in which this vocabulary is deployed, the underlying principles of organization: the buildings' grammar.

The first principle is irregularity in planning. Generally, the Indian builder works with a system of order and symmetry in which no dimension or proportion is arbitrary; but in the Rajput palaces such rigours are frequently relaxed. The various apartments typically are joined not in a strictly symmetrical pattern but in a loose, meandering fashion, creating an overall form that is free (figures 11 and 12). No regular geometrical shape provides the boundary, and no particular axes predominate; the parts connect in ways which are logical in respect of their functions, but which geometrically appear casual. Many of the Rajput palaces were built in stages over very long

9
Jaisalmer: the Gaj Vilas, an 18th-century extension to the palace, overlooking the Chauhata – the open square immediately inside the Hawa Pol, at the entrance to the fort.

periods of time and it would seem reasonable to regard their irregularity as a consequence of their piecemeal construction. In addition, many of them are built on uneven, hilly sites. But these conditions, though no doubt they helped, will not fully account for the approach we find. If strict regularity is the necessary end, it can be achieved and sustained even on a hill; but in the palaces of Rajasthan it appears not to have been

sought with the customary zeal: the degree of informality suggests that asymmetry was considered quite permissible, indeed even exploited for its own potential.

This approach to planning profoundly affects how we read the buildings as we pass through them. Symmetrical buildings establish predictable patterns of repetition, so that in encountering one part we anticipate its reflecting counterpart.

10

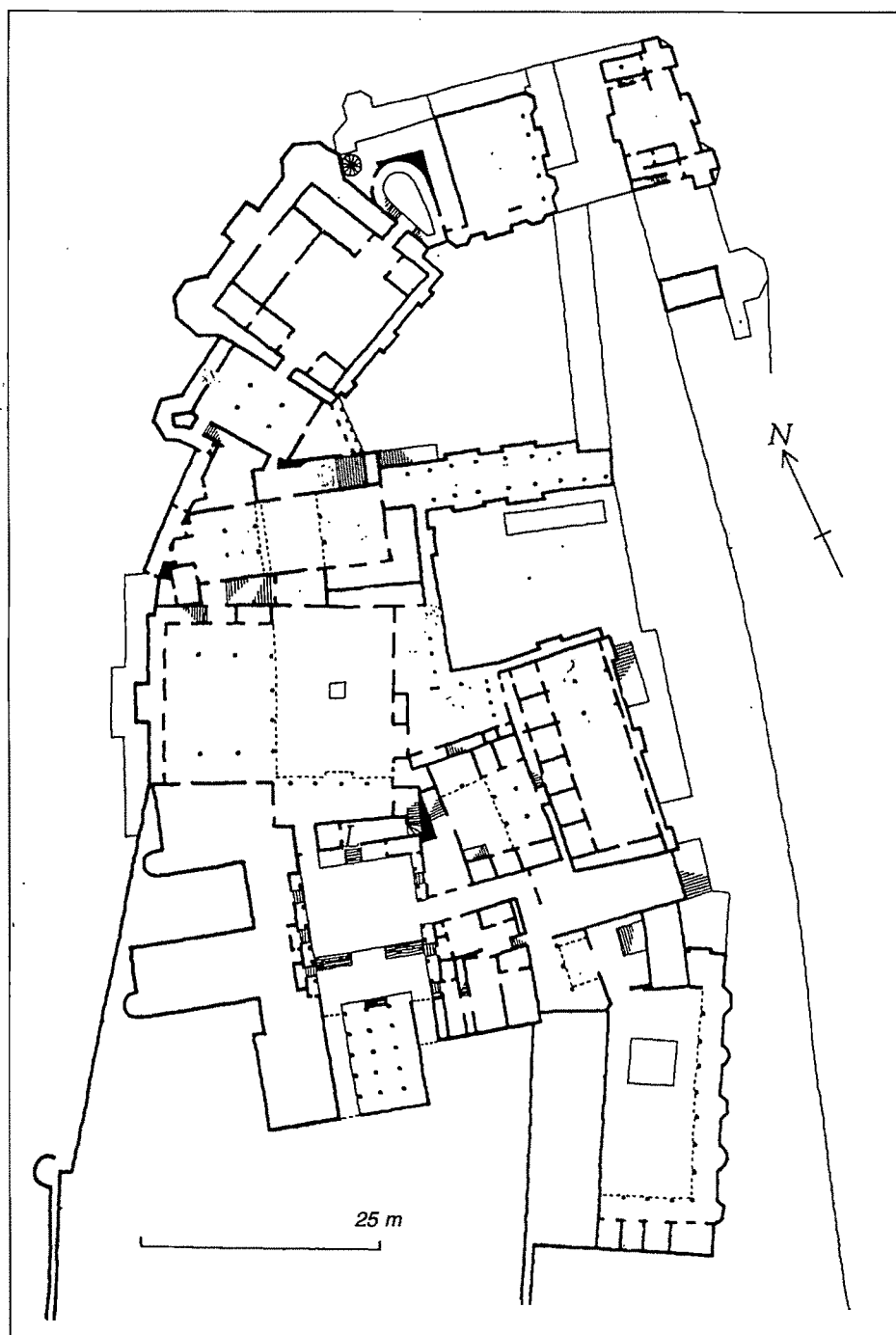
Jaipur: the Hawa Mahal. One of the most famous buildings of the Pink City, this extension to the palace dates from 1799.



From one quarter of the Taj Mahal, for example, we could reconstruct the whole; and mentally we do something like that while we are in it: we are able to apprehend more than we can see at any one moment. In an irregular building, by contrast, the flow of space is unpredictable and our expectations are confounded, leaving us unable to locate the centre or the periphery. Rudyard Kipling was inclined to relate this experience to the supposedly devious mind of the Rajput warlord, but – quite apart from invoking a stereotype – this account puts the whole cause on the patrons, while it is the aesthetic effect which would have been of interest to their builders.

Arising directly from the meandering plan, the walls and elevations are similarly irregular. Fixed in no singular plane, they establish varied rhythms of advance and recess. The outer walls are often contiguous with the fortifications, which enclose part of the hillside on which the palace is built, creating the sometimes false impression of a multistoreyed structure. Although Rajput palaces – unlike their Mughal counterparts – do often contain many levels, the effect is greatly exaggerated when the inhabitable parts are perched above a vast substructure. In Udaipur, for example, the high-level garden courtyard is achieved by building on the top of a rock which is completely encased by stone and incorporated into the body of the palace (figure 13). The appearance from the exterior is of airy pavilions supported by grim embattled walls.

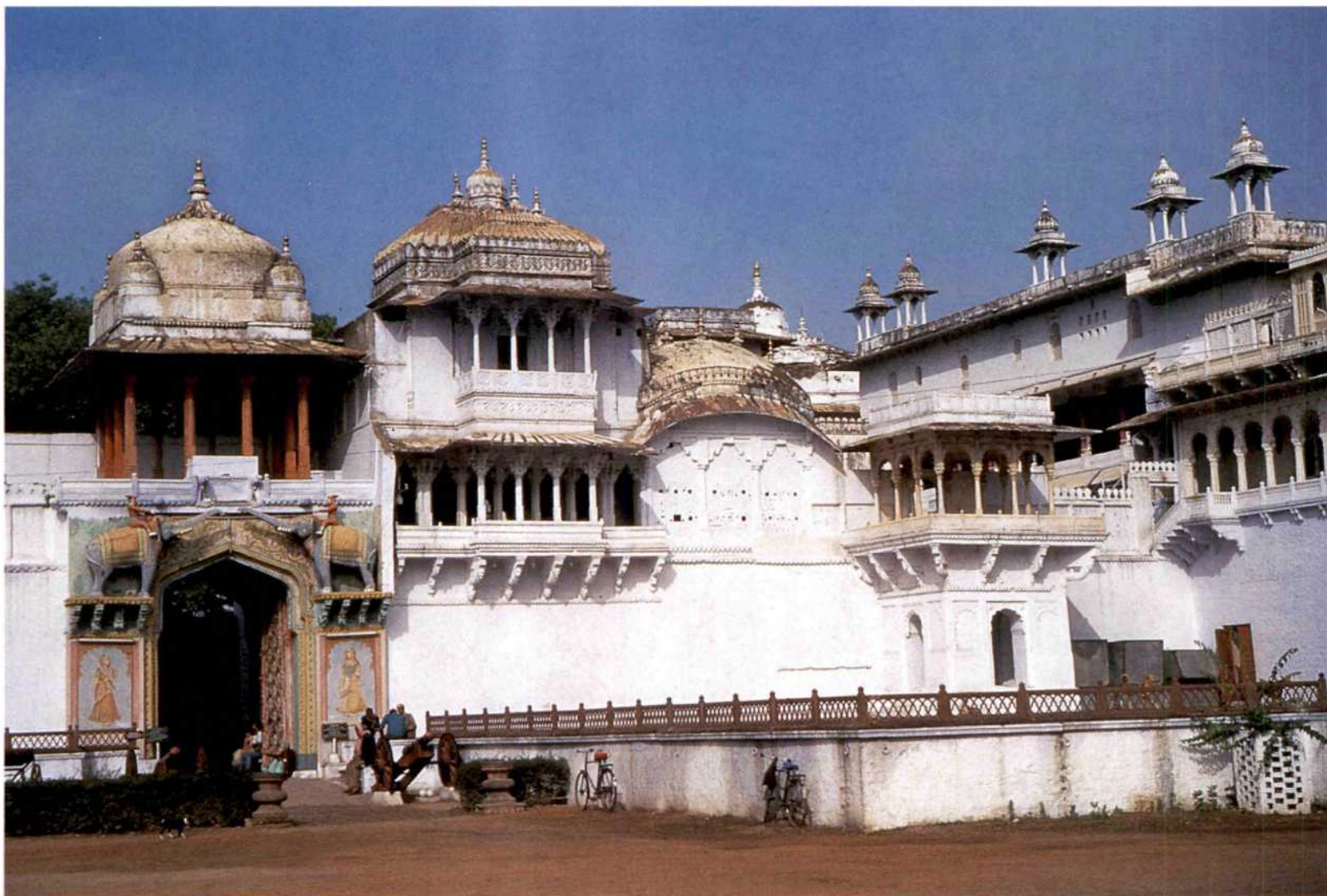
Another distinctive feature of the Rajput aesthetic is supplied by the interior decoration. Walls and ceilings, and even floors, are brilliantly painted with vibrant colours and bold designs. Most of what survives today dates from the 18th century or later, and all of the major palaces that were still in use at that period have notable examples, but the most complete scheme is perhaps that at Bikaner, with a whole succession of variously painted apartments (figure 14). Floral and abstract patterns are common, but so too are figurative paintings. Chief amongst the latter are historical subjects: representations of important events in the life of the state or its ruler. Also favoured are certain religious themes (those also found in Rajput painting on paper), such as the lives of Krishna and Rama, who were not only revered as gods but projected as ideal models for



a king. A further treasury of subject-matter was provided by Rajasthani folk legends, such as the elopement of Dhola and Maru. The pictorial style of these last especially also often has its source in folk culture. Indeed, as far as painted decoration goes, no clear line distinguishes courtly from plebeian taste in Rajasthan, and one is reminded of A.K. Coomaraswamy's description of Rajput court painting as "an aristocratic folk art".

Equally sumptuous, the decoration of Mughal palaces is much more refined and intricate, with a more regulated palette. Occasionally, Rajput patrons encouraged their craftsmen to imitate such schemes – the mirrorwork in the Jai Mandir of the Amber palace is one particularly fine example – but generally their preference was for something bolder. Even as late as the 19th

11
Jodhpur: plan of the
assembly of palace
apartments within
Mehrangarh, at the level
of the Moti Mahal
Chowk.



12
Kota: apartments around
the Hathi Pol at the
entrance to the palace
(from 1625 onwards).

13
Udaipur: the eastern
front of the palace
(mostly 17th and 18th
centuries). The Badi
Mahal is at the far end.





14
Bikaner: the Anup Mahal, remodelled in sumptuous style in the 18th century.

century, when European influence can be detected in Rajasthani interiors, something of the old spirit persists. One apartment in the Bikaner palace has English tableware stuck like tiles to the wall; a throne room in Udaipur has gaudy paperweights glued like bosses around a niche; and in the Takhat Vilas in Jodhpur, brilliantly coloured Christmas-tree balls are suspended from the ceiling. Here, as before, whatever is taken from elsewhere is fearlessly transformed to make it fit the Rajput style.

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Figure 11 drawn by Sarah Glynn. All photographs by the author.

DATING THE NATARAJA DANCE ICON

Technical Insights

Sharada Srinivasan

One of the most quintessentially Indian of icons is the bronze Shiva Nataraja dancing the *anandatandava* or the cosmic dance of bliss, from Tamil Nadu. The mystique surrounding the concept of Nataraja or Shiva as cosmic dancer and the shrine to Nataraja at Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu embodying this concept has stirred the imagination in India and the West. The “cosmic” dimension to the dance of Shiva has rendered it one of the most modern of religious ideas and perhaps the most evocative 20th-century symbol of holism between science, art, and mysticism: succinctly described by Coomaraswamy as “poetry, but none the less science”.¹

There are problems in making attributions of date and provenance for south Indian icons on stylistic grounds and visual comparison alone. Few of them are datable by means such as inscriptions or archaeological contexts. This has complicated their authentication and the identification of forgeries, and there is a need for their forensic fingerprinting as a safeguard against theft. Thus it is relevant to technically fingerprint them, i.e. to look for unique technical features by which they may objectively and accurately be characterized and thereby stylistically dated, authenticated, or traced. In what is internationally recognized as the first and most comprehensive interdisciplinary study on the fingerprinting and stylistic authentication of south Indian metal icons, this writer undertook the technical fingerprinting of 130 art-historically important images in the collections of the Government Museum, Chennai, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and British Museum, London, using lead isotope analysis and trace elemental analysis from bulk or interior composition as reported in her doctoral thesis,² which give the most powerful technical fingerprints, being dependent on intrinsic and unchanged geochemical factors. This study also touched upon dance iconography in

relation to south Indian bronzes. Thus, characteristic analytical signatures were identified for different stylistic groups ranging from pre-Pallava, Pallava, early and high Chola, late and post Chola, to Vijayanagara and early and late Nayaka/Maratha periods, which assisted in the stylistic dating of bronzes of uncertain attributions and using which half the entire sampled collection was recatalogued.

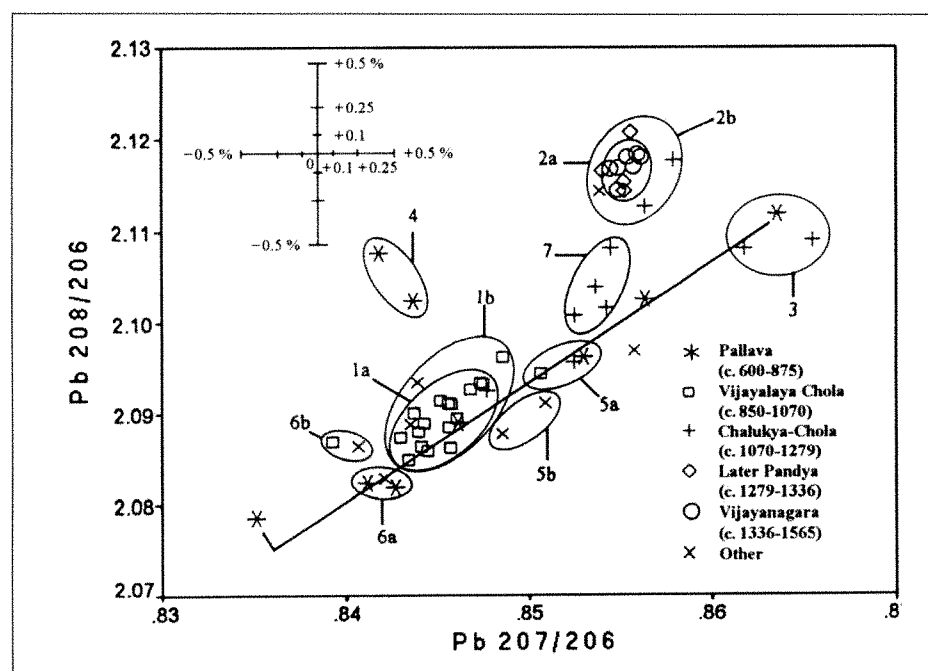
Some findings from such archaeometallurgical fingerprinting for the dating of Nataraja metal icons are discussed against the background of the development of dance iconography in south Indian art and sculpture, especially in temples such as at Chidambaram, where the worship of Nataraja – Shiva in the specific dance movement with the left leg extended, most often described as *bhujangatrasita karana* – is celebrated conceptually, sculpturally, and architecturally. It had previously been widely believed that the Nataraja bronze icon was an early Chola artistic accomplishment of the late 9th–10th century. However the archaeometallurgical study surprisingly indicates that the Nataraja bronze icon had already been formulated and cast under the Pallavas (circa 600–875) along with other depictions of Shiva’s dance. This, together with finds of sculpture of *bhujangatrasita karana* suggests that the Pallava period was a crucible for wide-ranging iconographic development in stone and bronze, coinciding with the rise of the worship of Nataraja at Chidambaram. Nevertheless this study underscores the fact that the casting of Nataraja bronzes reached its zenith both in artistic excellence and output under the Imperial Cholas, described here as the Vijayalaya-Cholas (circa 850–1070) after the first ruler of this dynasty, including important patrons such as Queen Sembiyan Mahadevi, King Rajaraja, and King Rajendra Chola. The role of women patrons such as Sembiyan Mahadevi in the excellent

depictions of dance-related iconography in bronzes is highlighted. Under her patronage Nataraja images in stone seem to have really come into their own. In contrast to the ascendancy of the worship of Nataraja at Chidambaram in the late Chola period, the technical study suggests a slump in the production of Nataraja images in the late and post Chola periods classified here as the Chalukya-Chola (circa 1070–1279), and later Pandya (circa 1279–1336). No analysed Nataraja bronzes could be dated from their technical fingerprints to the Vijayanagara and early Nayaka period (circa 1336–1565), which fits the fact that these rulers were zealously Vaishnava in their religious affiliations.

CONCEPTS OF “NATARAJA” AND “CHIDAMBARAM”: THE SCIENTIFIC DIMENSION

Fritjof Capra in his cult book *The Tao of Physics* indicates the manner in which the Nataraja icon has epitomized the romantic collusion between eastern mysticism and modern physics, stating that “modern physics has shown that every subatomic particle not only performs an energy dance but also is an energy dance...for modern physicists Shiva’s dance is the dance of subatomic matter.”³ While the interpretation of the Nataraja icon as Shiva’s cosmic dance has permeated the modern understanding, it is intriguing to explore the scientific farsightedness of its creators.

Certainly the classic Nataraja icon can be seen as an anthropomorphic visualization of dynamic cosmic processes. The image metaphorically depicts the five actions of Shiva, *panchakritya*: creation suggested by the drum in the right rear hand, protection by the front right arm in *abhaya mudra*, the vanquishing of evil and ignorance being symbolized by the trampled demon *apasmara*, the giving of solace symbolized by the



front left arm extended across in *danda hasta*, and destruction by the fire in the rear left arm, while the circular aureole or *prabhavali* depicts the cosmos in perpetual flux in cycles of creation and destruction. This cosmic activity is inspired by Parvati as consort Shiva-kami, the energizing female principle or Shakti. The dramatic cosmic effects of this dancing are poetically captured in various texts like the *Naishadhiyacharita*, which describe the scattering of myriad stars in the sky and splintering of rocks and crystals of Mount Kailash (*Naishadhiyacharita*, 22, 15), and of Shiva playing with crystal balls as if they were newly created planets⁴ (the Vadnagar *prashasti* inscription in praise of Kumarapala).

However, even more fascinating than this apparent sensitivity to the flux and motion of cosmic phenomena, are the philosophical implications of the concepts of Nataraja and Chidambaram: whereby Shiva is not just the cosmic dancer but is himself the sentient universe. These ideas hint at the intriguing paradoxes of quantum physics such as observer-influenced reality inherent in Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle and wave-particle duality; or the notion propounded by eco-scientist James Lovelock of the Gaia or “earth mother” theory whereby the earth (or the universe by extension) may be seen as a self-regulatory or “live” system. Going back to metaphysical Upanishadic concepts, Shiva’s cosmic dance weaves together the ideas of *anandatandava* (*ananda*: bliss; *tandava*: Shiva’s dance) and *chidananda* (*chit*: mind; *ananda*: bliss), i.e. dance of bliss within the

1
Lead isotope ratio plots of $Pb208/206$ vs $Pb207/206$ and for sampled south Indian images with markers according to dynastic chronology. The ellipses indicate groups of objects with similar lead isotope ratios which relate to the metal coming from similar sources. The objects lying close to the line would have lead from two sources.

consciousness, as captured in the hymn to Nataraja "*Kunchitanghrim Bhaje*" by the 13th-century poet Umapati Shivacharya of Chidambaram.⁵ The shrine to Nataraja at Chidambaram (*chit*: consciousness; *ambaram*: cosmos) thus architecturally and conceptually links the cosmic realms and the inner consciousness through Shiva's dance. A verse in the *Tatvaryastava Stotra*⁶ on Nataraja at Chidambaram elucidates this *akasha* or cosmic aspect, whereby not only is Shiva's dance cosmic, but Shiva is also identified with the cosmos itself: *hatakasabhanivasas satakatapannasakala-haridantah ghotakanigamo mayanatakasakshi jagatpatir jayati*. "In the verse following, the golden hall of Chidambaram, beautified over and over again by the Cholas and their successors is specially mentioned, and Shiva's dress composed of the quarters, is an attribute identifying him with the sky as the sky-clad and Chidambaram is the sacred spot for the element, sky. His special dance is one in which, as the Lord of the universe, he is the universal dancer and the witness of his own dance. There is special allusion to the illusion (*maya*) that he creates, which he removes before finally assuring emancipation." Chidambaram, the centre for the worship of Nataraja since the 7th century, is the only shrine where Shiva as cosmic dancer is worshipped in the inner sanctum or *garbhagriha*, instead of the aniconic lingam, whereas elsewhere metal Nataraja icons are processional images for festivals, the *utsava murti*. The *Chidambaram Rahasya* or secret of Chidambaram concerns the worship of Shiva as the *akasha* lingam or as an empty space.

DATING AND AUTHENTICATION FROM ARCHAEOMETALLURGICAL FINGERPRINTING

Unlike the radiocarbon methods which are used to date carbon-rich organic matter, there is no absolute method for dating metal objects. While thermoluminescence analysis can be used for dating clay cores inside hollow cast bronzes, south Indian bronzes are nearly all solid cast with no clay cores. Hence, an archaeometallurgical approach based on metal analysis and chemical fingerprinting was explored, the usefulness of which stems from the possibility that metal artefacts may be grouped on the basis of chemical similarities resulting from shared sources

of metal or methods of metal processing and alloying. Such studies can be a useful diagnostic tool in the typological classification or relative dating and/or identification of provenance of the artefacts, as has been attempted for Himalayan bronzes.⁷ For this a statistically significant number of objects has to be investigated, while the sampling techniques should ensure that interior and uncorroded bulk composition is analysed, rather than surface corrosion which is variable. Although the composition of intentionally alloyed elements can vary randomly, the composition of trace elements in particular can provide useful fingerprints since they would be related to intrinsic geochemical factors of the source of copper. Thus the author sampled the 130 metal artefacts using portable equipment with internal drilling of up to 1 cm with minimal damage of less than 1 mm of surface area, barely visible to the eye. This technique also ensured that the analysis reflected the bulk or interior composition rather than surface corrosion. Then accurate compositional analysis for the 130 copper alloys was undertaken using inductively coupled plasma optical emission spectrometry for eighteen elements (copper, zinc, lead, tin, iron, nickel, arsenic, antimony, bismuth, cobalt, phosphorus, sulphur, chromium, manganese, vanadium, cadmium, silver, and gold) at Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, Egham.

More than elemental analysis, lead isotope ratio analysis provides the most powerful fingerprinting technique for metals⁸ since isotopic composition, unlike elemental composition, is not affected by chemical processes so that it is unchanged from ore source to processed metal. This is because the isotopic composition of lead is measurably distinct and characteristic for different ore deposits due to geological factors such as the age of the deposit, the concentrations of parent isotopes of uranium and thorium at the time of formation of the deposit which decide the proportions of formation by their radioactive decay into the daughter isotopes of Pb206, Pb207, and Pb208, and the concentration of Pb204, i.e. the primary non-radiogenic isotope of lead. Thus the lead isotope ratios of artefacts with lead from the same source will tend to cluster together providing a unique fingerprint for that group and for the individual bronzes. Highly accurate lead isotope analyses were undertaken

on sixty of the images and artefacts using thermal ionization mass spectrometry at the Oxford Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art. Ore, slag, and artefact correlations were also attempted by the author from studies on ancient mining debris from eight sites in south India, to aid in fingerprinting images by source of metal. The lead isotope approach has also been used on Chinese Buddhist images.⁹

Thus from technical analysis it was found that some fairly discrete lead isotope ratio and trace elemental patterns or analytical signatures could be identified for a significant number of archetypal images representing the different stylistic groups of south Indian bronzes. Images of uncertain dates and attributions could then be compared with these group characteristics, based on which the images could then be “dated”, i.e. their stylistic attributions reassessed; thus for as much as half of the 130 sampled bronzes such attributions were modified using this approach. The major elements of copper, tin, zinc, and lead did not show very characteristic trends for different stylistic groups since these were intentionally added by the metal craftsmen and their concentrations may not have been too strictly controlled. However, significant patterns could be detected in the trace element concentrations due to their being inherent to the metal smelted from the ore source. For about half of the analysed collection (which was better dated by art historical consensus) trace element trends were detected which were found to relate well to groupings based on dynastic chronology, for the elements of arsenic (As), bismuth (Bi), nickel (Ni), cobalt (Co), and antimony (Sb). The lead isotope ratio plots such as of Pb208/206 vs Pb207/206 and Pb206/204 vs Pb207/206, also followed discrete trends for different artefacts when grouped by dynastic chronology (figure 1). In general the lead isotope trends were found to complement the trace element patterns: which suggests that to a fair extent distinct sources of metal were widely used at different periods. Thus from the framework of their lead isotope ratio and/or trace element composition (for As, Bi, Sb, Co, Ni) the images were stylistically resolved into the following groups: pre-Pallava, early Pallava and Andhra group (circa 200–600), middle Pallava (circa 600–850) and later Pallava (circa 850–875), early and high Vijayalaya Chola (circa

850–1070), early Chalukya-Chola (circa 1070–1125), later Chalukya-Chola (circa 1125–1279), later Pandya (circa 1279–1336), Vijayanagara and early Nayaka (circa 1336–1565), and later Nayaka and Maratha (circa 1565–1800).¹⁰

Methods in non-destructive testing (NDT) were experimented with in collaborative projects initiated by the author with atomic energy laboratories in India in attempting to fingerprint a few bronzes including five from the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Mumbai and three from Government Museum, Chennai¹¹ and these are currently being used by them for fingerprinting bronzes.¹² However, though interesting and significant in themselves, these methods do not give information on stylistic reassessment, which the author’s approach has accomplished using lead isotope analysis and trace element analysis, and which is the crux of a successful authentication and fingerprinting exercise to provide a tracer method to tell apart a genuine antique from a modern forgery. Radiography is cumbersome, involving transport of large solid images and high-security objects, and it is not as useful for solid cast images which result in fairly opaque radiographs; radiographs and holograms serve as more advanced forms of archival retrieval, documentation, or indexing than photographs. X-ray fluorescence is a semi-quantitative surface analytical technique which only analyses corrosion products which are variable across the surface and give no unique fingerprints, while *in situ* metallographs are partly destructive apart from being variable over the surface. Furthermore the analyses in these studies were made from filings from pedestals which need not represent the main body of the image and could also be contaminated by surface corrosion.

EMERGENCE OF NATARAJA UNDER THE PALLAVAS

The link between dance and the plastic arts can be detected from the earliest art of the Indian subcontinent, such as the Mohenjodaro (circa 2500 BCE) statuette of the dancing girl and an enigmatic slightly twisted stone torso which may suggest the form of a male dancer with left leg lifted, not unlike the Nataraja icon. The interrelation between the fine arts and classical dance traditions of the *Natyashastra* (1st–2nd



2
Bhujangatrasita karana in Bharata Natyam, demonstrated by Sharada Srinivasan.

3
One of the earliest sculptures of Shiva in bhujangatrasita karana, 7th-century Pallava, Siyamangalam. Photograph courtesy Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, Pondicherry.

century CE) are described in the Gupta-period treatise *Vishnudharmottara Purana*. In the earliest sculpture, this link seems best exemplified in the limestone friezes from the great stupa at Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh of the Satavahana period (circa 1st–2nd century CE) where postures akin to Natyashastraic depictions are seen, including the twisted torso and lifted leg. With the rise of the worship of Shiva as cosmic dancer in the Deccan and south India, especially under the Cholas, dance movements such as *karanas* were precisely and profusely depicted.

While Shiva is seen in various *karanas*, the Nataraja brings to mind the pose with the left leg lifted at hip level and extended across the body,

as seen in Bharata Natyam (figure 2). While this posture is generally described as *bhujangatrasita* (i.e. serpent fright) based on agamic texts, the *Tandava Lakshana* of the *Natyashastra* describes this as the *bhujanganchita karana* (i.e. serpent touch).¹³ For clarity, all other depictions of the dancing Shiva are described here as *Natesa* images. Although the pose of Shiva as Nataraja in *bhujangatrasita karana* is best known, it is not seen much outside Tamil Nadu. The earliest, but isolated, example is reported in Gupta sculpture from Bhumara, Uttar Pradesh (circa 5th–6th century CE). An image of Shiva dancing in the *bhujangatrasita karana* is well delineated on a pilaster in the 7th-century Pallava cave temple of Sri Stambheshvara at Siyamangalam in Tamil Nadu (figure 3) although the front left hand is not crossed over but at the side in *gaja hasta*. A fine 8th-century Rashtrakuta cave painting¹⁴ from Ellora, in Maharashtra, seems to be the first example of the typical Nataraja pose with leg and hand crossed over. Otherwise in Gupta and north Indian sculpture, Shiva in *chatura tandava* (i.e. rhombus posture) is more frequent, as also seen in a dynamic 6th-century Chalukyan sixteen-armed Natesa from Badami, Karnataka, while Shiva dancing in *urdhvajanu* pose, with lifted leg pointing down is often seen in Pallava sculpture such as the Dharmaraja Ratha at Mahabalipuram.





4

Lead isotope ratio analysis suggests that this Nataraja from the British Museum is Pallava (circa 800) and hence is the earliest known Nataraja image. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.



5

Lead isotope ratios for this Nataraja from Kunniyur, now in the Government Museum, Chennai, are consistent with an attribution to the later Pallava period (circa 875). Photograph courtesy Government Museum, Chennai.

Hitherto, it has generally been believed that the Nataraja icon in bronze was developed by the early Cholas. However an unexpected finding from archaeometallurgical fingerprinting undertaken by this writer is that two Nataraja images of Shiva with leg extended in *bhujangatrasita karana*, which had previously been considered early Chola, actually fitted the lead isotope trends for the Pallava group. The first is a delicate Nataraja from the British Museum (figure 4) which may well be the earliest known Nataraja bronze image, datable to the Pallava period, circa 800. Indeed in aspects such as the looped waistband or *katisutra* it resembles the Natesa from Kuram¹⁵ of Shiva dancing in *urdhvajanu* pose in the Government Museum, Chennai for which the lead isotope ratios fitted those for the Pallava group (indicated by the linear trend of the line on figure 1, from mixed lead from two sources). The second is the delightful Nataraja image from Kunniyur (figure 5) in the Government Museum, Chennai. Although it had been previously dated as a 10th-century Chola bronze, keeping in mind the indicators from technical analysis, it better fits the elegant idiom of some bronzes argued to belong to the later Pallava period (circa 875) such as the Tripurantaka from Ponvilaintanpatti.¹⁶

Thus these results indicate that the famed Nataraja bronze icon was in fact a Pallava innovation, predating its wide-ranging depiction under the Cholas. This is in fact consistent with the idea that the worship of Nataraja at Chidambaram goes back to at least the 7th century as indicated by the hymns of Sambandhar and Appar who were contemporaries of the Pallava king Mahendra Varman I, and with the Pallava sculpture of Shiva in *bhujangatrasita karana* from Siyamangalam. Indeed, Gaston's study¹⁷ shows that of all regions it is in Pallava sculpture that all five types of images of dancing Shiva identified by her are found, with four on the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, indicating this to be a most experimental phase. A Pallava Nataraja sculpture is also reported in the Tirukkadaimudi Mahadeva temple, Tiruchchinampundi, Tanjavur district.¹⁸

THE ROLE OF WOMEN PATRONS IN THE CHOLA PERIOD

Archaeometallurgical analysis supports the notion that the worship and iconographic depiction of

Nataraja bronzes reached its artistic and technical apogee under the Imperial Cholas, referred to here as the Vijayalaya Chola dynasty, spanning the lineage of the direct descendants of the first ruler Vijayalaya Chola (circa 850–875) including the best known rulers and patrons of this dynasty such as Aditya Chola (circa 875–904), Sembiyan Mahadevi (circa 940–1006), Rajaraja Chola (circa 985–1014), and Rajendra Chola (circa 1014–1047). This is seen from the fact that seven out of twelve bronzes of the dancing Shiva investigated for this study had analytical signatures (of lead isotope ratios and/or trace element trends) which fitted those of the Vijayalaya Chola group. Figure 1 indicates this clustering of lead isotope ratios for bronzes of this group (indicated as Group 1a) which can be related to the fact that they come from a common source.

Certain important images which had been previously dated with some conviction from art-historical study fall in this group. They include the fine Velankanni Nataraja, Government Museum, Chennai, eulogized by Rodin¹⁹ for its perfection in composition which has been attributed to the Rajaraja Chola period (circa 985)²⁰ and a fine Nataraja image in the Victoria and Albert Museum which has been attributed to the patronage of the distinguished widowed queen Sembiyan Mahadevi (circa 975).²¹ Although at Chidambaram itself the earliest Chola records begin only from Rajendra Chola I and Kulottunga Chola I, a painted panel in Rajaraja's Brihadishvara temple in Tanjavur shows him worshipping the Nataraja at Chidambaram. The *bhujangatrasita karana* is depicted in Panel 35 at the Brihadishvara temple.

An interesting aspect of the finest Chola bronzes is the highly developed sensitivity to dance iconography and this could be linked to the fact that women, both royalty and laity, played a very active and even pivotal role in the patronage of art and bronzes in this period. Many queens were well-versed in art and dance, such as the princess Kundavai, sister of Rajaraja Chola and a munificent patron who trained in the Vazhuvur dance tradition which still survives. Indeed Nataraja images were invariably consecrated with Parvati as Shakti, the energizing female creative principle, and due to the notions of divine kingship this bestowed a high creative status on the queens and consorts of the king.

Temple dancers or *kuttans* were also accomplished patrons with several Chola records of endowments of bronzes and lamps by them and by attendants such as from the Shvetaranyeshvara temple at Tiruvenkadu. The image of the dancer Paravai Nachayar, consort of Shaiva saint Sundarar, is also worshipped and a splendid such bronze is in the Chidambaram temple. In fact the story of the creation of the *Natyashastra* as the fifth *veda*, suggests the manner in which dance as ritual created a space for spiritual release and precept for women who might have faced other restrictions in this sphere: "Indra approached Brahma and besought the Creator for a Veda which might be made accessible to those prohibited from studying the Vedas. Thereupon Brahma created the *Natya Veda*...certain aspects could only be expounded by women...hence the *apsaras* (or celestial dancers) were created."²²

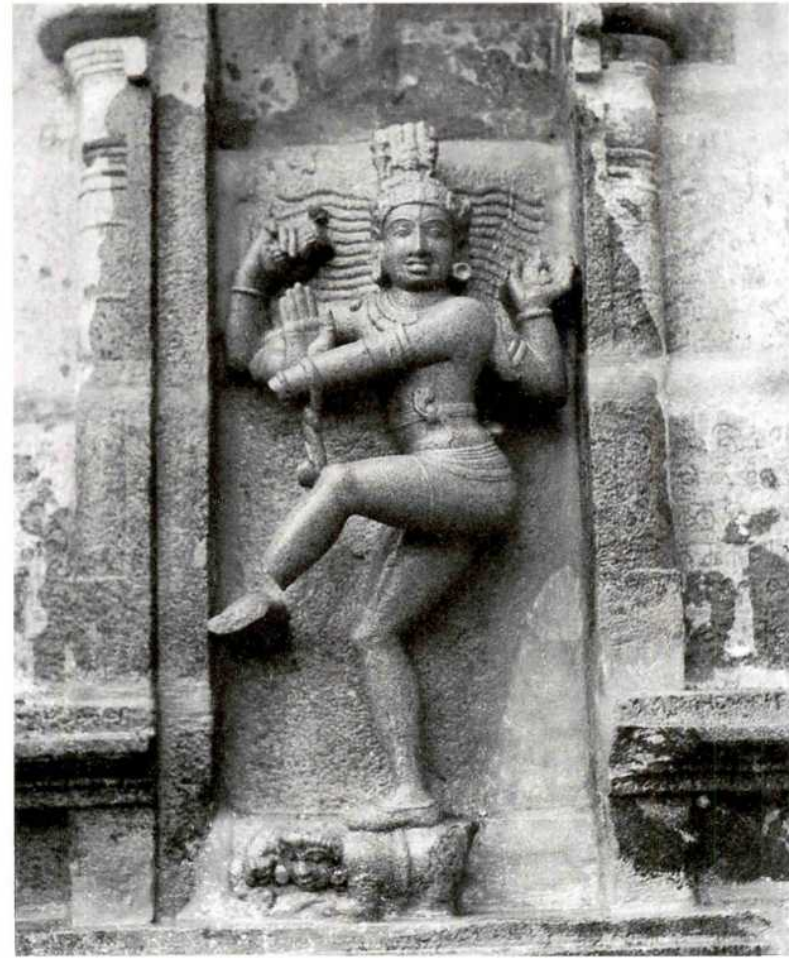
Arguably the most important patron who spearheaded high Chola artistic creativity with unprecedented expansion in temple building was the extraordinary widowed queen Sembiyan Mahadevi. As great grand-aunt, she also dominated the period of artistic achievement of Rajaraja Chola.²³ Indeed Harle²⁴ ranks her as amongst the great patrons of all time. A remarkable feature of the bronzes attributed to Sembiyan Mahadevi is the authoritative depiction of women together with the masterly execution of dance movements as best exemplified by the dancing Kali in a perfect and muscular *ardhamandala* posture in the Shiva temple in Tiruvalangadu, attributed to her by Nagaswamy.²⁵ A bronze for which the technical fingerprints fit the Vijayalaya Chola period is the dramatic eight-armed Mahishasuramardini (figure 6) from Turaikadu, now in the Government Museum, Chennai, which is similar in inspiration to this dancing Kali: with eight arms boldly executed in dance *mudras* including the *alapadma* (lotus) gesture of the rear upper right hand with fingers splayed. A promising trend for further dating of bronzes within this Vijayalaya Chola group is the fact that, in the Group 1a (figure 1) consisting of lead isotope ratios overwhelmingly of Vijayalaya Chola bronzes, the early Chola bronzes tend to group at the bottom, the high Chola bronzes along the middle, and the bronzes which may be counted amongst the latest of this group at the

top of the ellipse, showing a chronological trend. This could perhaps be related to the progressive mining of ores of a deposit since the rocks deeper in a deposit would tend to be older, with higher Pb208/206 and Pb207/206 ratios. However to ratify this trend it would be useful to analyse many more bronzes in this way. Indeed this Turaikadu Mahishasuramardini falls somewhere in the middle of this group.

Remarkably, it seems that only in the temples related to Sembiyan Mahadevi's patronage do stone sculptures of Shiva as Nataraja in *bhujangatrasita karana* come prominently and consistently into vogue, with previous depictions having been sporadic. In earlier Chola temples, Shiva images seem more often featured in postures such as *urdhvajanu* as seen in the Koranganatha temple at Srinivasanallur of the Aditya Chola period (circa 875) next to an inscription, and in the Brahmanpurishvara temple (figure 7) in Pullamangai of the period of Parantaka I (905–955). A fine Nataraja sculpture

6
Mahishasuramardini,
Government Museum,
Chennai. Technical
fingerprints for this
bronze are consistent
with an attribution to
the high Vijayalaya Chola
period, while the
developed use of dance
iconography is consistent
with the style patronized
by Queen Sembiyan
Mahadevi (circa 975).
Photograph courtesy
Government Museum,
Chennai.





7
Nataraja in *urdhvajanu* pose in the Brahmanpurishvara temple in Pullamangai of the Parantaka Chola I period (905–955). Photograph courtesy Ecole Francaise d’Extreme-Orient, Pondicherry.

8
Nataraja sculpture in the *mahamandapa* of the Manavaleshvarar temple, Tiruvelvikudi (circa 949–957), of a style attributable to Sembiyan Mahadevi, in whose temples this image in stone seems to come into its own much more than before. Photograph courtesy Ecole Francaise d’Extreme-Orient, Pondicherry.

of the Sembiyan school is seen in the *mahamandapa* of the Manavaleshvarar temple (figure 8), Tiruvelvikudi, attributed to the period of her son Uttama Chola (949–957). This and other stone Natarajas in temples, such as the one at the Kailasanatha temple (circa 980) built by her in the town of Sembiyan Mahadevi named after her, are marked by a consistency of style not really seen before.

LATE CHOLA PERIOD: DECLINE IN NATARAJA BRONZES AND THE RISE OF CHIDAMBARAM

The late Chola period is categorized here as (a) early Chalukya-Chola (circa 1070–1125) for clarity with the ascendancy of Kulottunga I, a prince of Eastern Chalukya lineage, to the Chola throne, and (b) later Chalukya-Chola (circa 1125–1279). This period is also the one where the celebration of Shiva’s cosmic dance reached its pinnacle at Chidambaram. At this shrine which was mostly built from the time of Kulottunga Chola I to Vikrama Chola (12th–13th century), the 108 *karanas* associated with the *tandava* or dance of Shiva are dynamically represented in sculpture (figure 9) with explanatory verses from the *Natyashastra* on the east and west *gopuras*,

which have been of vital importance to the reconstruction of *Natyashastra* traditions. The temple at Tiruvannamalai is another important shrine with *karanas* sculpted on the *gopuras*. At the Chidambaram temple a prominent sculpture is of Shiva in *urdhvatandava* (figure 10), with leg pointing upwards, seen in the facade of a column in the Shivaganga tank. The *bhujanganchita karna* is demonstrated by a dancer on the lowest and the second of a set of eight panels on the east and north *gopuras*.

Paradoxically, despite this profusion of dance-related iconography in sculpture, from technical analysis the post Vijayalaya Chola period, i.e. after 1070, is not one from which a great number of Nataraja images can be identified; this may be due to a decline in technical skills in bronze casting. Only one Nataraja image from Melaperumbalam (figure 11) could be attributed to the period between later Chalukya-Chola and later Pandya, circa 1280, from its lead isotope ratios and trace element trends, with its lead isotope ratios falling in Group 2b in figure 1. Although this bronze had been thought to be of the 10th century, on reappraisal following technical analysis, this image can be seen to mark a departure from the classic Vijayalaya Chola

9

Sculpture of dancer in *chatura tandava* from a *gopura* in the Chidambaram temple. Photograph courtesy Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, Pondicherry.



10

Sculpture of Shiva in *urdhvatandava karana* beside the Shivaganga tank, Chidambaram temple. Photograph courtesy Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, Pondicherry.



11
Nataraja,
Melaperumbalam, now
in the Government
Museum, Chennai.
Technical fingerprints for
this bronze suggest a
late Chola date (circa
1280). Photograph
courtesy Government
Museum, Chennai.



12
Nataraja, Belur, now in
the Government Museum,
Chennai. Although the
pedestal is inscribed to
1510, technical
fingerprints for the image
support a dating to the
later phase of the
Vijayalaya Chola period
(circa 1040–1070).

idiom to the more provincial vigour of late Chola art as seen in the *ganas* or the dwarfs playing the pot and cymbals. The *bhujangatrasita karana* is not as well depicted here as in earlier Chola examples, with the leg slumping and not lifted high enough at hip level. It compares favourably to a Nataraja from the Valampuranadasvami temple also at Melaperumbalam; in this town too is the temple of Dakshinapurisvarar with an inscription of Vikrama Chola.²⁶

Another interesting facet was that none of the analysed Nataraja images could be attributed to the Vijayanagara period from their technical fingerprints. As seen in figure 1 the lead isotope ratios of Vijayanagara bronzes cluster together in Group 2a, indicating they came from a similar source. Although the Belur Nataraja in the Government Museum, Chennai (figure 12), has a pedestal inscription of 1510 suggesting it was cast in the Vijayanagara period, the analysis from the main body fitted the technical fingerprint for the Vijayalaya Chola period. Indeed stylistically the image can be regarded as a decadent late Vijayalaya Chola bronze executed post-Rajendra Chola (i.e. circa 1040–1070), while the pedestal being separate could be later. Further, its lead isotope ratios falling to the top of the ellipse of Group 1a of Vijayalaya Chola bronzes rather than lower down with earlier pieces, supports such an attribution.

However the continuance of dance iconography in the Vijayanagara period is seen in Vaishnava images such as the Balasubramaniam from Kodiakadu (figure 13), in *urdhvajanu* pose, now in the Government Museum, Chennai. This fitted trace element trends for the Vijayanagara and early Nayaka group (circa 1336–1565). Two analysed Nataraja images from the V&A could nevertheless be attributed to the later Nayaka and Maratha period, circa 1800, and indeed Shaivite worship is well known at temples of this period such as at Madurai.

CASTING NATARAJA: INSIGHTS INTO THE MAKING OF PANCHALOHA ICONS

In the first detailed study of its kind reported in this writer's thesis, the salient metallurgical features of traditional image casting in south India were explored by putting together field investigations made in 1990–91 of foundry practices for lost-wax casting in Tamil Nadu



(figure 14) and Kerala, observations of the macro-features and technical features of image casting, and comparisons with textual prescriptions in the 12th-century *Manasollasa*, the Gupta *Manasara* (5th century), and other *shilpashastras*. The lost-wax process or *madhuchehisthavidhana* as described in texts is one where a model was made of wax (of a solid piece of wax in the case of south Indian solid cast icons), which was then covered with a clay investment to form the mould. The wax was then melted out and metal poured into the cavity to take the shape of the icon.

About 80 per cent of the 130 sampled images analysed by the author were leaded bronzes with tin contents varying up to 15 per cent and with lead contents varying up to 25 per cent with the

13
Balasubramaniam from Kodiakadu in *urdhvajanu*, now in the Government Museum, Chennai. This is representative of Vaishnava dancing images. Photograph courtesy Government Museum, Chennai.

rest being leaded brasses with zinc contents varying up to 25 per cent. However, while the images were deliberately made of more castable alloys such as these, the specialized manufacture of high-tin bronzes exploiting the properties of intermetallic compounds of beta (23 per cent tin) and delta (33 per cent tin) bronze to make articles such as vessels, cymbals, gongs, and mirrors is also seen over a long period in south India: the author's initial metallurgical and ethnographic studies made in 1991²⁷ were the first to establish links between surviving craft traditions in Kerala and finds from Indian prehistory, even going back to the Indus Valley to suggest that these techniques took root in the Indian subcontinent before spreading to other parts of Asia.

South Indian images are called *pancha-loha* or five-metalled icons in popular parlance. A *sthapati* interviewed by me in 1990 mentioned that this was because small amounts of gold and silver were also added together with the major elements of copper, tin, and lead. These were added more as a shastraic or as a ritual necessity, no more than about 100–200 mg for example, into the runner at the rear of the head as this was believed to improve lustre. Analyses on south Indian images by this writer support the likelihood of such small amounts of gold and silver having been added. However these would

not be easily detectable in relation to the great weight of the castings; for instance a typical Nataraja image cast at Swamimalai could weigh up to 200 kg. What is particularly remarkable about the Nataraja icon is the manner in which the design elements, such as the circular aureole with the attached limbs and flying girdle or locks, would have enabled the even distribution of metal during pouring, in addition to the runners which would have been discarded after casting.

In Kerala some surviving lost-wax techniques for making lamps, vessels, and bells (apart from the making of wrought and quenched high-tin beta bronze vessels, gongs, cymbals, and high-tin delta bronze mirrors) were first documented by the author in 1991,²⁸ and with Dr I. Glover in 1998. These are techniques not much in vogue elsewhere and relate to prescriptions in shastraic texts. To obtain sound castings care was taken to make moulds of three grades of clay with the use of the finest layer next to the wax model consisting of lampblack and dung (figure 15): this would have resulted in the finest carbonaceous adsorbent layer also required in modern investment casting. Prescriptions in the *Manasollasa* for maintaining highly reducing conditions within the mould were followed with the use of a lighted wick at the mouth while pouring metal. Special furnaces were used for de-waxing the mould, and for preheating moulds to



14
Casting and finishing of a Nataraja at an image-casting workshop in Swamimalai, Tanjavur district. Photograph: Sharada Srinivasan.



15
The finest grade of clay mixed with lampblack and dung is applied on a wax model of a lamp in a workshop for lost-wax casting of lamps and bells in Kerala. Photograph: Sharada Srinivasan.

16
The pouring of molten metal into runners to a large mould buried under mud in the making of a cauldron or *urali* in Kerala. Photograph: Sharada Srinivasan.

the same temperature as the metal to be cast, to prevent bursting of the moulds and to ensure fluidity of the metal. Rope-turned hand lathes were used to excellent effect for polishing lamps. Figure 16 shows the casting of metal into a large mould for a cauldron or *urali* in Kerala.

CHOLAS: SKILLED BRONZE CASTERS OR SMELTERS?

Since the existence of chemical similarities in different artefacts (such as shared trace element patterns or lead isotope trends) can stem from their having come from similar ore sources, this writer surveyed and collected debris (such as slag and ore specimens) for technical investigation from eight sites in south India showing evidence of ancient mining of ores and metal processing activity or smelting. These included Mamandur in Tamil Nadu, Tintini, Kalyadi, and Ingaldhal in Karnataka, and Somalaragada, Nellore, Agnigundala, and Dhukonda in Andhra Pradesh. Slags refer to the metallurgical waste solidified from the molten state after smelting or extraction of metal from ore. Whereas it is very difficult to technically correlate ores to finished metals from the composition because of their inherent inhomogeneities, slags contain metal remnants trapped when molten after the metal has been retrieved as an ingot, and thus comparisons of trace elements in the metal remnants in slags



with the finished metal can more meaningfully indicate possible ore sources. The slag specimens were quantitatively investigated by scanning electron microscopy (SEM) followed by wavelength dispersive electron probe micro-analysis (EPMA) at the Institute of Archaeology, London.

From these, a few speculations could be made about likely ore sources; for instance the nickel versus cobalt ratios of copper slags from Tintini compared fairly well to that in images of the Vijayanagara period so that Tintini could have been a source of metal for them. Indeed Tintini is reasonably close to Hampi, the former capital of



17
Microstructure of slag from Kalyadi, Karnataka (400X) with remnants of bronze containing 7 per cent tin which, exceptionally, seems to have been made by co-smelting copper and tin ores. This and the nickel versus cobalt ratios match those of images of the Vijayalaya Chola period (circa 850–1070) suggesting it could have been a source for this period. Photograph: Sharada Srinivasan.

the Vijayanagara empire.²⁹ Investigations on slags (figure 17) from Kalyadi indicated that they appear to have been made by smelting together copper and tin ores to get a bronze composition with 7 per cent tin, rather than melting together copper and tin, which is an extraordinary finding scarcely reported elsewhere in the world.³⁰ The nickel versus cobalt ratios for these slags were similar to those for the Vijayalaya Chola bronzes, which also had an average of 6.8 per cent tin suggesting that this could have been a source for bronze. This may suggest that the Imperial Cholas were not only highly skilled at bronze casting, as widely recognized, but may also have been sophisticated bronze metallurgists.

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ON THE GOD-MASK IN THE DIONYSIA AND INDRA JATRA

François Pannier

Translated by Christophe Roustan Delatour

In her book entitled *Le dieu-masque, une figure du Dionysos d'Athènes* (1991), Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux gives a very interesting analysis of the antique vases depicted in August Frickenhaus's *Lenäenvasen*, published in Berlin in 1912 as part of the Wincklemann-Programm.¹

Examining the first of these vases, as early as 1828, E. Gerhard and Th. Panofka had described an "Indian Bacchus trophy" tied to a post.² Although Frontisi-Ducroux expresses some misgivings about this designation, we hope to show, in fact, just how relevant it might be.

The distinctive feature of these vases is, indeed, a very peculiar representation of the Greek god of wine, Dionysus: a bearded mask, crowned with ivy and fastened to a pillar (figure 1). Around this pillar, maenads and satyrs perform a ritual. Surrounding them are vases of various shapes, all meant to hold wine.

We shall not repeat Frontisi-Ducroux's exhaustive study of the different motifs displayed on the vases. However, several points are particularly noteworthy. Beneath the spout of an *oinochoe* (wine pitcher), for instance, a mask is shown resting on the ground. Likewise, a *lekythos* (container for scented oil) from Palermo (figure 2) is described thus:

The mask is placed, as on the other *lekythoi* of this series, in the centre of the decorated surface, on the side opposite the handle. Taking up a full third of the painting, it is shown frontally, standing, as it were, on its beard and the tips of its curly locks. Its eyes stare widely at the spectator and, remarkably, its mouth is open, revealing its teeth, as if about to cry out.

An entire chapter of *Le dieu-masque* is devoted to cups and vases with eyes. Between these huge eyes is sometimes inserted the head of Dionysus

or a Gorgon mask. In her foreword, Frontisi-Ducroux writes:

But between the masks worn during the festival of the god – ritual accessories worn by tragic actors or participants in a procession – and the cultic mask – a face, devoid of body, through which the god reveals himself to his worshippers – there is a significant difference. While parallels abound in most cultures when it comes to the first two categories – that of the dramatic mask and that of the ritual mask – such is not the case for the cultic mask: the use of a mask as divine effigy, immobilized instead of being worn and animated, *remains exceptional and appears specific to the Greek world and to Dionysus.*

We have deliberately highlighted this last phrase because there still exists at least one ceremony where this kind of mask is used: the festival of Indra Jatra, in the Kathmandu valley in Nepal. And between the Greek Dionysia³ and Indra Jatra there are, as we shall see, many similarities.

Indra Jatra lasts for a week, ending on the full moon of September. It is an agrarian-based ceremony associated with rain, which commemorates the passage of Indra, King of the Gods (figure 3), through the Kathmandu valley. Having come to pick flowers for his mother, Indra was mistaken for a vulgar thief. Bound hand and foot, he was awaiting his fate when his mother Aditi, worried by his absence, descended from the heavens and revealed her son's divine nature. In exchange for his freedom, she pledged to bestow dew upon the valley every morning, and also to welcome the valley's departed souls in heaven.

In describing the festival's proceedings, we shall omit those of a purely local order, such as the worship of the Kumari, the living goddess



1
Representation of
Dionysus Acrolythe from
an Attic red figure cup
(*kylix*), circa 480 BCE
(Antikenmuseen, Berlin,
catalogue no. F 2290).
Drawing: C. Roustan
Delatour.

Take, for instance, Euripides' *Bacchae* (The Bacchantes), composed for the Spring Dionysia of 405 BCE and performed in Athens' theatre. Though not a canonical text, the wealth of information it contains makes it a pertinent reference. Euripides gave this familiar story a decidedly dramatic rendition, yet, in all likelihood, he chose to preserve its spirit rather than alter it, because it was to be played to a crowd of the god's devotees and during a festival dedicated to him. Tampering with such sacred matters, even in Athens, would have been unacceptable.

In *Bacchae*, we find Dionysus returning incognito to Thebes, the land of his forebears, founded by his grandfather Cadmus. His mother Semele's love affair with Zeus has been denied by part of his family, and so the very basis of his divinity is refuted. He returns, therefore, to have it recognized, especially by Pentheus, king of Thebes, in favour of whom Cadmus has relinquished the throne.

found in several towns throughout the Kathmandu valley.

At the start of the festivities, a mast is raised in front of the palace. A pine tree is selected for this purpose, in front of which a male goat is sacrificed. The raising of this mast is the privilege of Newars belonging to the guild of mustard-oil millers. Statues of Indra, arms spread apart, are placed in cages at various spots – such as at the foot of the mast near the palace – symbolizing the god's imprisonment. Other effigies of the god are tied up with string. Finally, posts supporting wooden or metallic masks of Bhairava are placed in ritual areas. These posts (at times arranged to form a St Andrew's cross) are covered in foliage, rendering the masks almost invisible. The Bhairava masks, some of gigantic size, like the one next to the old palace, dispense beer to the crowd by means of a pipe coming out of their mouth. This form of Bhairava is widely regarded as a formidable aspect of Shiva; however this is a point for later discussion.

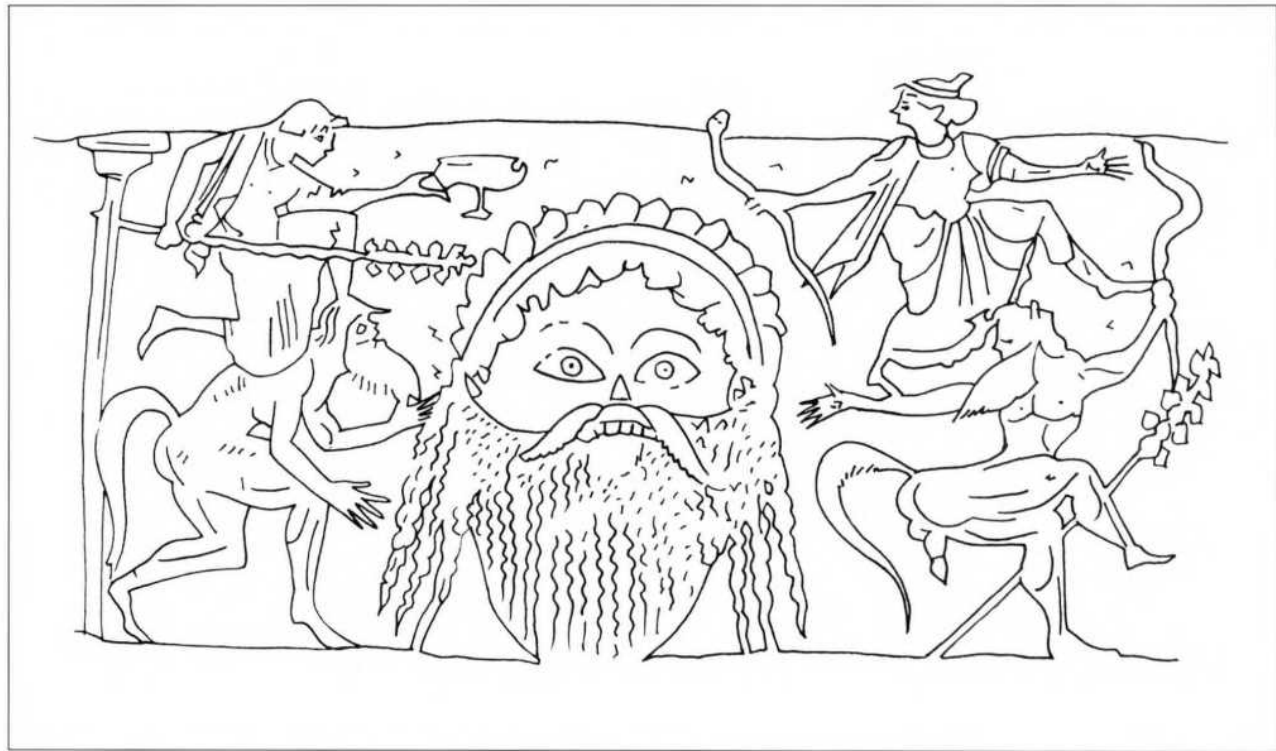
Masked men take part in dancing, and children perform plays. Then, on the eve of the full moon, a procession is led through the town, symbolically collecting the souls of the year's dead, in accordance with the promise made by Indra's mother to receive them in her heaven.

Finally, on the last night of Indra Jatra, the mast is felled and the crowd rushes to tear off pieces of the consecrated wood. Afterwards, it is dragged down to the river to be immersed.

The foreign aspect of certain components of Indra Jatra – as opposed to those deriving from a purely Newari tradition – has already been pointed out by previous authors.⁴ However, when we compare elements of the Dionysia in Greece as described in *Le dieu-masque* with those of the Indra Jatra we find several striking parallels.

2

Copy of the drawing on a *lekythos* from Palermo, attributed to the painter of Gela. Drawing: C. Roustan Delatour.



3

Mask of Indra, Nepal. Newar, 17th century.



Persistent in his refusal to acknowledge Dionysus's divinity, Pentheus nonetheless follows him into the mountain, disguised as a woman. The king hides in a pine tree in order to observe the bacchantes...only to be discovered and torn apart by them; among whom is his own mother, Agave, sister of Semele.

It is worth noting that in *Bacchae* as well as in the Indra Jatra, recognition of the god's divine nature is brought about by his mother. In both cases, also, the etymology of the mother's name relates to Earth. In the Hindu pantheon, lineages are extremely complex and contradictory. "We find, nevertheless," states A. Daniélou, "that Aditi, Indra's mother, is sometimes identified with the Earth in the Puranas. She is also identified with the Primordial Expanse. According to the *Vishnu Purana*, the Adityas or Sovereign Principles are twelve in number [one of them being Indra] and their father is the sage Kashyapa or Vision. Their mother [Aditi] was unable to bear within her womb the burning seed of Kashyapa. The sage therefore divided the foetus into twelve parts."⁵

In Greece, Semele was likewise equated with Earth. She was struck down by celestial fire when Zeus appeared to her in all his splendour. The unborn Dionysus, retrieved by Zeus, was hidden within the god's thigh until his maturity.

In both instances, too, the thunderbolt is a family heirloom – property of Indra and property

of Zeus, father of Dionysus – and both their mothers were subjected to the ravages of fire during pregnancy, thus brutally interrupted. Moreover, it is precisely these two gods, Zeus (in the form of the Roman Jupiter) and Indra, whom we shall meet, side by side, in Georges Dumézil's comparative studies on Indo-European mythology.⁶ And let us observe that while dew is bestowed upon the valley of Kathmandu by Indra's mother, so too is Dionysus the dispenser of dew. Such traits clearly point towards a fertility ritual connected with the Mother Goddess.

In fact, the analogies which can be found between the Dionysia and Indra Jatra – and, in some cases, between rituals which are specific to either god – are numerous, if not innumerable.

The preferred animal of sacrifice to Dionysus, for example, was a male goat. The bacchantes, during their orgies, were clad in the skins of goat kids, and certain actors masqueraded as goat-men. During the preparation for Indra Jatra also – once the ceremonial tree is selected – a male goat is sacrificed.

Since we mention the pine tree, we should recall that before being slain, Pentheus had hidden in just such a tree, on the advice of Dionysus himself. Furthermore, bacchants and bacchantes were known to don pine cones and pine branches as their insignia during the ceremonies. The Newari crowd throwing itself upon the hallowed post – cut down at the end of Indra Jatra – and hacking off strips of wood as relics, greatly resembles the maenads attacking the tree in which Pentheus is hiding; uprooting and throwing it to the ground before tearing the king to pieces and carrying off parts of his body.

About the Attic region, Louis Gernet wrote : "Dionysus is a very important deity there. He is connected, notably, with the Anthesteria, which at one time were simply called Dionysia, and which Thucydides even mentions as 'the most ancient Dionysia': the Anthesteria are both a festival of the dead and a festival of wine."⁷ Elsewhere, he adds: "It is from the dead which come to us foods, crops, and sprouts." Now we may recall that in order to obtain her son's freedom, one of the promises Indra's mother made was to send dew each morning. Here again, fertility plays a predominant role.

Henri Jeanmaire draws attention to several other astonishing details:

The essential episode of one of the most characteristic legends of [the Dionysian] cycle, the chastisement of Pentheus, hurled from the pine tree in which he had taken shelter from the maenads' fury, is easily interpreted as a myth of the ritual uprooting of the Tree – the representation of a ritual of this kind having allegedly been found in Minoan glyptic art. The scale on which the scene is recounted by Euripides in his *Bacchae* has even led to the belief that its dramatic construction may have been modelled after some ceremonial scenario. The wood from which the archaic idols of Corinth were made was regarded as belonging to the pine tree felled by the maenads; which the Pythian priestess had given orders to find and worship as a god.

The worship of the pine, and its identification with the god, immediately bring to mind the northeastern regions of Asia Minor, where other clues have also invited a search for Dionysus's eventual birthplace. There, cults have flourished and evolved out of what may originally have been the cult of Dionysus. The religion of Attis and his mother, with its barbaric mythology and savage rites so contrary to Greek religious sentiment, perpetuated the memory of this close association between the god and his surrogate tree, in the grand procession of the pine, hewn and solemnly transferred to the Palatine on March 22. [...] The transportation of Attis's pine tree was conceived as a funeral procession lamenting the god's death, an effigy of whom was fastened to the trunk along with his attributes and crowns of violets.⁸

Marcel Detienne, referring to Pausanias, informs us further about the aforesaid archaic idols of Corinth in southern Greece: these statues were effigies of the masked Dionysus, all perfectly identical, covered with gold except for their faces, painted vermilion.⁹

We have already mentioned, in broad outline, some of the stages of Indra Jatra. Gérard Toffin, discussing the structure of brotherhoods in the Nepalese village of Theco, has this to add:

Until now, only the brotherhoods in the lower part of Theco have been considered.

In the upper village, the configuration of the social units totally changes. Indeed, there the *gu* do not play any role whatsoever during the funerals. Two small groups, therefore, fulfil the brotherhoods' functions: numbering ten members each, they are respectively called the "red face", *hyamu khwa*, and the "yellow face", *mhasu khwa*. All of their members belong to the farming caste. They have rights to the distinctive title – already noticed in Pyangaon – of *gom*. Each family of the upper part of Theco is related, in a hereditary way, to one of these two groups.

Each "face", *khwa*, has a specific deity, symbolized by a mask made of copper. The mask of *hyamu khwa* is red in colour, that of *mhasu khwa* is yellow (or more exactly gold) – hence the name of these two brotherhoods. Both masks represent the god Indra. They are first worshipped during the full moon of Chaitra (March–April), when all of the wood intended for cremation has been stored, then a second time, at the end of the month of Bhadon (August–September), during the festival of Indra Jatra. On this last occasion, the masks are fixed to the top of two great masts, 24 cubits in height, which are left standing for four days in front of the temple of Bal Kumari. During the year, both masks are kept, in turn, in the house of the *gom*.¹⁰

Regarding the same festival in Pyangaon, Toffin reports that at the beginning of the ceremony, two dancers go about the town, one wearing a red mask, the other a golden one.¹¹

As each town, village, and even neighbourhood of the Kathmandu valley boasts

its own variations and interpretations of the rituals, it would be venturesome to claim an outright connection between the two types of effigies and their colours. As much as they appear to be an additional argument in favour of a link between the two ceremonies, we shall have to restrict ourselves to a mere statement of these facts.

On some of the vases inventoried in *Le dieu-masque*, several large circles can be seen, surrounding the depictions of the god. These circles are often interpreted as "cake-offerings". Now, after having studied descriptions in the Mahabharata and the Puranas of the festivities dedicated to Indra's tree – which, incidentally, he relates to the Newari Indra Jatra – J. Gonda wrote:

In Spring, a tree was planted in honour of Indra, to which were attached foliage, flowers, crowns, perfumes, ribbons, cakes, and other such lucky charms, after it had been brought, with great pomp, from the forest. The many people who have accompanied it on this occasion, dance around it; tribute is paid to it and a statue of Indra is placed at its foot.¹²

The practice of suspending cakes – if it ever existed there – seems to have been abandoned in Nepal. Emphasis, however, must be put on the word "seems", for as these pageants can adopt strikingly different aspects from one town or village to the next, the possibility that a tradition of this kind might still exist cannot be altogether ruled out. It might, perhaps, have explained the existence of circles on the Greek vases.

Another attribute shared by Indra and Dionysus is their lubricity and love of drink. In her description of a *lekythos* from Palermo, Frontisi-Ducroux mentioned a huge mask with a wide mouth revealing the teeth, as if about to scream.

4
Detail of Attic black
figure cup, c. 510 BCE.



This explanation may well prove correct; but in view of the comparisons we are presently attempting, another interpretation may be put forward. During Indra Jatra, masks of Bhairava are displayed. Be it the gigantic Sweto Bhairava, made of gilded repoussé metal, placed in front of the royal palace, or the more simple forms in wood, metal, or terracotta, these masks all have open mouths, enabling a tube to pass through, from which flows the local beer, *chang*. Over-indulgence in this beverage (of which the god's mask is not the sole purveyor) invariably leads to drinking binges and brings about a certain licentiousness. Gérard Toffin gives a fascinating and highly detailed account of these events.¹³

As a fair amount of the iconography studied in *Le dieu-masque* has to do with rituals in which the distribution of wine played a substantial part, establishing a link between these two types of masks might prove worthwhile. The huge mask pictured underneath the spout of a black figure *oinochoe* from the Berlin Museum studied by Frontisi-Ducroux, is particularly appropriate for such a comparison; as is the painting on a *chous* (wine jug) from Athens, displaying a large mask, and that of the aforementioned *lekythos*. Moreover, on this last vase, a maenad is shown brandishing a snake above the mask. Coincidentally, the masks of Bhairava are adorned with snakes in their hair.

In a study dealing with the mythology of trees, Jacques Brosse reports that during certain festivities related to the Dionysian cult, fountains of wine flowed in the island of Teos and in Andros.¹⁴ What if the mask described by Frontisi-Ducroux only had its mouth open in order to make way for a slender tube, designed for the distribution of consecrated wine to the god's followers?

More striking still, perhaps, is the comparison of the eyes. Those of Bhairava's masks are extremely protruding, lending a powerful, almost prying – or perhaps apotropaic – presence to the god. In this respect, they are similar to the so-called "prophylactic" eyes found on the bellies of the Greek vases or cups reviewed in *Le dieu-masque* (figure 4).

But who is Bhairava, the fierce? This deity, or rather epithet, covers an infinite number of personae. Sylvain Lévi had this to say on the subject, early in the last century:



Bhairavas – Beyond the main protagonists lurk an untold number of lesser deities, spawned at will by rival religions. First among them are the Bhairavas: "the Fierce". Designated under this disquieting name are spirits emanating from either Maha-Deva, that is to say Shiva, or Devi; the male and female energies whereby the almighty, divine power manifests itself. The territory of Nepal, though limited, serves as asylum to 5,600,000 Bhairavas and Bhairavis. Bhairavas are usually portrayed with an open mouth, prominent teeth, dishevelled hair, an extra eye on the forehead. Trampling their demonic foes, their representations recall the St George and St Michael of Christianity. Like most Nepalese deities, Bhairavas often go by fours, no doubt in order to face the four quarters; a strategic disposition such as this, for instance, is adopted by the *bhikshu* Chantikara, after having consecrated the ground at Svayambhu. The colossal number of Bhairavas allows for an infinite variety of combinations. From amongst the Bhairavas, not even the Buddha and holy seer Vasishtha are excluded.¹⁵

5
Repousse copper mask of
Bhairava, Nepal. Newar,
16th century.

Now, the name Bhairava is widely accepted as applicable to Shiva, especially during the Indra Jatra festival. However, in the catalogue of the Cernuschi Museum's exhibition *Idoles du Népal et du Tibet* (1996), featuring the Zimmerman collection, Pratapaditya Pal remarked, after having identified a monumental mask made of gilded repousse copper as Bhairava, a ferocious form of Shiva (figure 5): "It is not known, however, why Bhairava found himself involved in a festival honoring the Vedic god Indra."

But, after all, is Bhairava really Shiva? Custom has it so. Yet, as observed above, Bhairava is also an epithet meaning "fierce". Did Indra ever prove himself unworthy of such a title? Quite the contrary: it is likely that while confronting the demon Vritra – whose skull he ultimately crushed with his *vajra*, thus releasing the captive waters – Indra exhibited just such a terrible form, even though he did, in later times, demonstrate a certain cowardice. Though the texts are silent in the matter, it would be quite extraordinary if Indra did not rank among the 5,600,000 Nepalese Bhairavas. Does not the reference in the *Rig Veda* to the "fierce" Indra attest to this? The case is made throughout the numerous hymns which mention Indra, such as these two stanzas, taken from H.H. Wilson's translation:

Fifth *Ashtaka* – Third *Adhyaya*

Sukta VIII (XXV)

1. Fierce Indra, when animated by like fierce armies, encounter them: let the bright (weapon) wielded by the arms of thee who art mighty and the friend of man descend for our protection; let not thy all-pervading mind wander (away from us).

Sukta VIII (XXXIII)

2. Disgracing (Pashadyumna), they brought from afar the fierce Indra, when drinking the ladle of Soma at his sacrifice, to (receive) the libation (of Sudas): Indra hastened from the effused Soma of Pashadyumna, the son of Vayata, to the Vasishthas.¹⁶

This is only a small selection of what Vedic literature has said about the fierce Indra. But is it still possible, within this context (at least the Nepalese one, as we are dealing with Indra Jatra), to deny him the epithet "fierce"? If not, we should perhaps assume that a certain degree of transformation of this god into Shiva has taken

place. Actually, we know that in later mythology Indra becomes an aspect of Shiva. So this mask of Bhairava, dispenser of beer, could well represent a step, a milestone along the path of transformation. Furthermore, various Nepalese traditions connect this kind of mask to a ruler of the Kirata dynasty known as Hathu Dya, who was inadvertently beheaded by Arjuna, son of Indra, during one of the battles of the Mahabharata. This would seem to confirm the idea of a belated association with Shiva; achieved through the proselytism of that god's devotees. We are somewhat more in favour of the first hypothesis, although it goes against the current trend.

To complicate matters further, the texts indicate that Shiva and Vishnu sometimes assumed the appearance of Indra.

Coming back to the ritual, a difference remains, nonetheless, between Nepal and Greece. In the first case, the divine mask delivers beer; in the second, wine. One must, of course, take into account the contrast in climates of these countries, the common denominator being that both beverages are alcoholic. Now, not only was Dionysus said to have invented wine – which is well known – but he was also regarded as having introduced beer into regions where grapevine cultivation had failed.

During the celebrations of Indra Jatra, as in the Dionysia, theatrical performances are staged. The Greek plays became great classics and we are well acquainted with them. As regards Indra Jatra we turn once more (essential when it comes to Newari culture) to Gérard Toffin's account of the scenes he witnessed.¹⁷

Enacted solely by young boys, including the female roles, the performances often plagiarize the comedies of Indian cinema, while mythical and religious themes are droned out in plays of a sacred character. This seems a far cry from ancient Greek theatre, as we conceive it. But is our conception accurate? Granted, the context studied by Toffin was that of a small town. In the Athenian golden age, of course, culture, theatrical tradition, and the playwrights it produced would surely have given an entirely different dimension to their performances. This being said, some 2,500 years later, contemporary Greek culture might have shown a parallel evolution; drawing ideas from Hollywood films instead of Indian ones.



6
Gorgon mask between
two eyes on an Attic
black figure cup, 6th
century BCE.

In the Kathmandu valley, as we have pointed out, the festivities are accompanied by masked dances. The masks used are commonly known as *lakhe*. Actually, the *lakhe* is a demon belonging to the dangerous realm of *rakshasas* and *pishachas*. Commenting on this, Gerard Toffin calls the red mask worn in Pyangaon "*kwapa*". The iconography of this type of mask, as has sometimes been noticed, is very close to that of the Greek Gorgon (figure 6). If we compare these masks of *lakhe* with, for example, certain Greek vases, the western pediment of the temple of Artemis in Corcyra (circa 580 BCE) or the terracotta plaque found in the Athenaion in Syracuse (circa 570 BCE) – all showing Gorgon faces – we cannot avoid noticing some obvious similarities. Yet, curiously, whereas Greek art of that period, and Newari art down to contemporary times, were both extremely refined, this type of effigy reveals a savage, barbaric character, quite incongruous in these contexts. At this point, we are tempted to view this anachronism as the trademark of an exterior influence. But can we locate the origin of this iconography?

In his *History*, Herodotus expounds on the xenophobia of the Scythians, who were extremely loath to adopt foreign customs, especially Hellenic ones. Under such circumstances, it is all the more difficult to understand the presence in a Scythian tomb, near the village of Martonocha, of a bronze volute krater¹⁸ handle bearing a Gorgon figure and snakes, made in Greece circa 540 BCE; or of a bronze breastplate dating from the same period, also decorated with a Gorgon's head, found in the *kurgan* (burial mound) of Elizavetinski. Both of these sites are located north of the Black Sea.

The Greeks, renowned merchants, must have exported these products to Scythia knowing that nothing would prohibit their sale; the iconography probably conforming to Scythian traditions.

Concerning the krater handle, Boris Piotrovsky, former director of the Hermitage Museum, points out: "It is strange to note that Aeschylus (*Prometheus Bound* – circa 792 BCE) situated the haunt of the 'three winged sisters, the snake-haired Gorgons, terror of the mortals, whom no human being could behold without dying on the spot', precisely beyond the Black Sea, towards the Caucasus."¹⁹

This gives us a particularly vast area of distribution, especially since it is not restricted to the three zones considered here. What remains, then, is to try to locate the cradle of this tradition.

If we consider the Kathmandu valley as its birthplace, we would need to rekindle the 19th-century theories which claimed that the Himalayas were the starting point of the Indo-European invasions. Owing to the present state of our knowledge, this seems out of the question. An outside contribution, therefore, would appear to be at the root of the Newari masks.

It must be remembered that for the ancient Greeks, Dionysus was a foreign, oriental deity. He had travelled to India – but where, by the way, did the Greeks imagine India to be, and what entity did it encompass? Actually, when attempting to determine the god's birthplace, Hellenists have a tendency to situate it in West Asia, under Mediterranean influence. Henri Jeanmaire even writes, in his *Dionysos*:

We have seen that Euripides already admitted [...] a kind of universality of the

religion of Dionysus, which the god himself, escorted by his maenads, had diffused throughout the Orient before returning to implant it on his native soil. By quite a remarkable coincidence, the wanderings ascribed to Bacchus in the prologue of *Bacchae* roughly match Alexander's itinerary; however, nothing alludes to India, as yet unknown to the Hellenic public.²⁰

This coincidence may not be as remarkable as Jeanmaire suggests. Though it is indeed possible that part of the Hellenic public was unaware of India's existence, Herodotus mentions it in his *History* as early as 440 BCE. Confined to the Indus Valley, India was then a Persian satrapy; the conquest of which had been completed either by Cyrus (circa 530 BCE) or Darius (circa 519 BCE). Constant feuding between Persians and Greeks could not have prevented the latter from knowing about these regions. Their commercial network – which, incidentally, followed the ancient Mesopotamian trade routes – extended relatively far and brought them into contact with the Persians. By that time, important Greek colonies had already sprung up in West Asia. Furthermore, a fair number of Greek slaves were held captive in Persia; as Alexander's conquest of that country also demonstrated. Likewise, Greek mercenaries joined the ranks of the Persian armies. Needless to say, information did circulate. And although Herodotus's other indications about Indians are scarce, his mention of "black-skinned men" clearly refers to the Dravidians.

The Phoenician trade routes, moreover, passed alongside some of the Asian coastlines. In the 10th century BCE, one such route furnished peacocks, monkeys, ivory, and metals. Although monkeys and ivory might suggest Africa, peacocks are typically Indian. And amongst the metals, gold was mentioned. In Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone* (495–406 BCE), Creon speaks of "the gold of India". Herodotus also tells of this gold, even though its supposed method of procurement is too fanciful to deserve attention.

Although the Greeks were the Phoenicians' rivals when it came to trade, they could not have been unaware of the origin of the merchandise. Euripides (circa 410 BCE) undoubtedly knew about India, and Alexander led his armies along a well-travelled trade route, as Dionysus had

probably done before him, especially since his grandfather Cadmus was himself Phoenician.

During his conquest, Alexander halted at Nysa, near present-day Peshawar, in the Indus Valley. According to Arrian's *History of Alexander*, his arrival was met by a delegation of local people who pleaded with him to guarantee their freedom and independence out of respect for Dionysus, founder of their city. On his way back to Greece, the god had apparently settled some of his soldiers in Nysa, former bacchants no longer fit to fight. Alexander and his troops, it is said, climbed the commemorative mountain, whereupon, the king sacrificed to the god. Several high-ranking Macedonians were possessed by the deity and seized with Bacchic ecstasy.

Though questions were raised, even in *Antiquity*, about the authenticity of this anecdote, an explanation can probably be found in Alexander's habit of identifying himself with the gods. In this respect, it seems the conqueror had mastered the use of psychological warfare, even to the point of annoying certain members of his own entourage.

But the main interest of this event, as far as our study is concerned, is to reveal the existence in the Indus Valley of a sanctuary which, though it is not the historical fountainhead of our rituals (but does such a place exist?), would be fit, geographically speaking, to answer several of our questions. Highly alluring, the Nysa theory is not sufficiently grounded to draw conclusions from. Nysa would be ideal, however, as both the point of junction and point of separation of the Dionysus-Indra cult.

Moreover, the denomination problem with which we are faced does not simplify our task. Arrian speaks of Dionysus; Daniélou of a cult of Shiva...each interpreting and christening it in terms of his own culture. Dionysus? Shiva? Indra? Were Alexander's troops so finicky when it came to designations? Undoubtedly, they were far more attentive to a certain type of ritual than to a precise deity.

Once again, we are left in the same state of confusion as with our Nepalese example, in which a mask of Bhairava is used during a festival dedicated to Indra. In fact, Nysa merely constitutes a stepping-stone within a much broader movement and plenty of other possibilities could be advanced. We can only

hope that future archaeological findings will allow us, one day, to determine a more precise origin. However, the nature of the materials involved may make that difficult. Newari *lakhe* masks are usually made of papier-mache. For other festivals, they can even be made of paper. Though such a technique is itself a remnant of tradition, it is highly unlikely to be revealed by excavation, especially in a region subjected to the monsoon. Unfortunately, the local funerary rites do not allow the same opportunities for discovery as in other cultures.

The main purpose of this article was, first and foremost, to shed some light on the various influences found in the rituals dedicated to Indra and Dionysus, during the festivals of Indra Jatra and the Dionysia. It would be far-fetched to claim that Indra is Dionysus or Dionysus Indra. (And for that matter, *which* Indra? The Mahabharata tells us that because of a conflict about propriety, Shiva imprisoned Indra in a cave, together with the four Indras of the preceding world ages.)

The idea seems to have made its way, nonetheless, of a single, common, protohistoric root giving rise to the separate existences of Dionysus and Indra; these, in turn, maturing within two geographically distinct belief systems and thus assuming a great variety of functions and personas,²¹ sometimes within a relatively limited area. Their respective tales – gathered over time and in various places – are enough to fill a multitude of lives, be they divine or otherwise. The simultaneous existence of five Indras in the epic is one example, serving to justify all which cannot be explained. Furthermore, the material which has reached us must be insignificant in comparison to the wealth of stories told, 25 centuries ago, in the Attic region, the Indus Valley, or Nepal.

However, the extraordinary point is that images similar to those on 2,500-year-old Greek vases live on in a present-day festival that takes place in the valley of Kathmandu.

NOTES

This is a translated and edited version of “*Sur le Dieu-Masque: dans le Dionysies et Indra Jatra*” by François Pannier, published in *Lettre du Toit du Monde*, December 1998.

1 F. Frontisi-Ducroux, *Le dieu masque, une figure du Dionysos d'Athènes*, Ed. de la Découverte et Ecole

Française de Rome, *Images à l'appui*, no. 4, Paris and Rome, 1991. See also: A. Frickenhaus, *Lenäenvasen: 72, Programm zum Winckelmannsfest*, Berlin, 1912.

2 E. Gerhard and Th. Panofka, *Neapels Antike Bildwerke*, Stuttgart, 1828, pp. 363–64 (in reference to vase no.1848 in the Museum of Naples).

3 The Dionysia were festivals dedicated to Dionysus in ancient Greece. They comprised the Rural Dionysia, in December, and the Great (or City) Dionysia, held in Athens at the end of March, for which plays were created and performed at the Theatre of Dionysus, on the southern slope of the Acropolis.

4 Quoted from E. Chazot, “*Du primitif au classique*”, in *Masques de l'Himalaya*, ed. Raymond Chabaud, Paray-Vieille-Poste, 1989, p. 57.

5 A. Daniélou, *Le polythéisme hindou*, ed. du Rocher, Paris, 1992, p. 179.

6 G. Dumézil, *Mythes et dieux des Indo-européens*, Flammarion, Paris, 1992, pp. 69–80.

7 L. Gernet, *Le génie grec dans la religion*, La renaissance du livre, Paris, 1932, p. 116.

8 H. Jeanmaire, *Dionysos – Histoire du culte de Bacchus*, Payot, Paris, 1951, p. 21.

9 M. Detienne, *Dionysos à ciel ouvert*, Hachette, Paris, 1986, p. 42.

10 G. Toffin, *Société et Religion chez les Néwar du Nepal*, Centre régional de publication du CNRS, Meudon-Bellevue, 1984, p. 196.

11 G. Toffin, “*Indra Jatra, Essai sur une fête newar de la vallée de Kathmandou*”, *L'ethnographie*, no. 76, Paris, 1978/1, pp. 109–37.

12 J. Gonda, *Les religions de l'Inde*, Payot, Paris, 1966, p. 405.

13 G. Toffin, *Indra Jatra etc.*, op. cit.

14 J. Brosse, *La mythologie des arbres*, Payot, Paris, 1993, p. 137.

15 S. Lévi, *Le Népal, Étude historique d'un royaume hindou 1*, ed. Leroux, Paris, 1905, p. 382.

16 H.H. Wilson, *Rig-Veda Sanhita*, 1888, pp. 73 and 87.

17 G. Toffin, *Indra Jatra etc.*, op. cit.

18 A large bowl with two handles, used for mixing wine and water. The term *volute* refers to the shape of the handles (spirals).

19 B. Piotrovsky, catalogue of the exhibition *L'or des Scythes*, Grand Palais, Paris, 1975, p. 144.

20 H. Jeanmaire, *Dionysos etc.*, op. cit., p. 357.

21 It is worth mentioning that several vases studied by F. Frontisi-Ducroux (black figure *lekythoi* and wine containers) portray Argus, the hundred-eyed giant, destroyer of the ophidian monster Echidna. Argus, whom Frontisi-Ducroux relates to Dionysus, also bears similarities with Indra: they both slay a serpentine monster and they are both covered with eyes. Indeed, it is told that Indra was once cursed by the sage Gautama (whose wife he had seduced), causing *yonis* (vaginas) to appear all over the god's body. After 360 years of mortification the *yonis* turned into eyes. One of the places where these events are said to have taken place is Panauti, in Nepal (see: G. Béguin, “*Le temple d'Indreçvar mahâdev de Panauti*”, in *L'art néwar de la vallée de Kâthmându*, Paris, 1990, pp. 42–46).

NEWSLETTER FROM NEW DELHI

Kavita Singh

From late January to late February this year, Delhi was host to the *Tenth Triennale – India*. Organized by the Lalit Kala Akademi, this competitive international art exhibition has been held at nearly regular three-yearly intervals since its inception in 1968. The Triennale was conceived as an opportunity to bring in contemporary art from all over the world, giving Indian artists a platform for cultural interaction and exchange with worldwide peers. Whereas the exhibition does serve this purpose to some extent, it has also given rise to the popular media sport of “Triennale-bashing”. So although the mammoth show brings some pleasures and some disappointments, it also generates many controversies, much criticism, and the occasional tamasha. This Triennale was no different, and indeed, given the way it is organized, there can be no difference without structural change. But more on this in a moment, first a quick tour of the show.

The Tenth Triennale brought together some 300-odd works from 31 countries, including a large Indian contingent of 37 artists. The show was spread over three venues: the Rabindra Bhavan Galleries, the National Gallery of Modern Art, and the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society Galleries, all within easy reach of each other. The Akademi also published a profusely illustrated catalogue, with curatorial notes from every participating country and biographical details of all the artists. The jury awarded only nine out of ten designated prizes. Two of these awards went to Indian artists Probir Gupta and Hema Upadhyay; other awards went to artists from Australia, Croatia, France, Mexico, Singapore, Sweden, and the UK.

Organizing a show of the size and complexity of the Triennale is no mean achievement, and the Lalit Kala deserves congratulations for having pulled it off. The troubled recent history of the Akademi is well known; the Triennale is the first major international event that the Akademi has organized since its years of suspended animation while government audits and enquiries were proceeding. It was a pleasure to see the Rabindra Bhavan Galleries filled once again with art and audience. The Indian section which was selected by a panel of artists was housed here. It held some pleasant surprises. Among these was the work of Hema Upadhyay, a young Mumbai artist, whose installation “The Nymph and the Adult” faced the entrance. This installation consists of 2,354 cockroaches painstakingly made of wood, wire, and M-seal and pasted on to the wall and the floor in irregular formations. The knowledge that cockroaches will survive a nuclear holocaust provided the motivation for the artist, but the work has a teasing power beyond any messages, uniting as it does repulsion and attraction, ugliness (of the subject) and beauty (of the execution).

Utterly beautiful and laughably simple was “Contemporary Silence”, the installation of Eugene Carchesio of Australia. Carchesio is both an artist and a musician, and his strangely compelling installation consisted of a series of white paper cones pasted on a white wall. In musical instruments, cones take a point-source sound and make it swell to fill huge spaces. The stark room with its silent cones seemed to hum a meditative air.

Literally humming and whirring in a nearby room was a table fan that was

constantly blowing air into the huge plastic entrails of the Swedish entry, “Cheap High”. This installation consisted of hundreds of plastic shopping bags taped together by Gunilla Klingberg and Peter Geschwind into a room-sized looping and turning pipe that was kept inflated by the table fan. Here was consumerism turned into an organ of consumption and excretion, filling and emptying itself all the time.

At the NGMA, the work of two Cypriot artists, Maria Constantinidou and Achilleas Kentoni, was among the more interesting offerings. Called “The West Never Apologises”, it used a tiny video showing a range of holocausts, set in the base of a standing pipe. But more attention went to the French and the British artists here who won awards. Michele Blondel of France made beautiful glassworks in the shapes of the unicorn’s horn and the mermaid’s tail. Scattered among fragrant rose petals and shoes that are useless to the mermaid, it was an allegory of impossible desire. The British artist Catherine Yass is a portrait photographer. Her set of six large-scale photographic translights of Bombay filmstars was called “Star” and it attracted perhaps more comment than any other work in the show. Any enlarged, harshly lit portrait will be unflattering as it makes visible human flaws: the pores, wrinkles, eyes bleary with too much make-up, the strap of a wig, the suggestion of a squint. But did the work say very much that was new and interesting? I think not; the attention it drew was largely due to the popularity of its subjects.

And that brings us to a significant weakness of the Triennale. Many of the international participants had worked in



"Cheap High" by
Gunilla Klingberg and
Peter Geschwind
(Sweden), at X Triennale
– India, 2001.
Photograph: Prabhjit
Singh, courtesy Lalit
Kala Akademi, New
Delhi.

India, on Indian subjects, and with Indian materials. One reason for this was organizational: embassies were given a run-up time of about two months to select art works for the show. Several found it expedient to muster artists who were already visiting or working in India. What this does however is to turn the entire show into an ethnic enclave, with Indian and foreign artists all looking at "Indianness". If the Triennale could be an event to which participating countries sent the art that was important to them, it would set the stage for a truly cosmopolitan experience. As it did in the days when Jackson Pollock, Georgia O'Keefe, and Claes Oldenberg took part – to mention works from one country that did not even bother to participate this time.

It may not have been worthwhile for the US to send art to the Triennale, but there was an American on the awards jury, along with French, Australian, and two Indian members. There was a public controversy here: the two Indian jury members boycotted the awards function, saying they had been overruled by the

foreign majority which insisted on giving awards exclusively to installation artists and neglected works in conventional media such as painting and printmaking. Both the Indian jury members, A. Ramachandran and Akbar Padamsee, are well-known painters; their point was that the awards privileged an expensive, high-tech, international aesthetic which is out of reach for most Indian artists, and an Indian Triennale should be able to encourage works that are appropriate to a Third World context.

The Triennale – India could have been an important Third World art event, but leadership of the Asian contemporary art world has certainly been wrested by the Triennale at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan and the Asia Pacific Triennale at Brisbane, Australia. One of the weaknesses of our Triennale is the limited scope for a curator or director in the present set-up. An Indian jury selects Indian artists, and this time the contingent included some refreshing new names. But the Akademi can only invite other governments to send entries, and does not seem to have the power to screen

works, or ask for specific artists. Thus China, which has such a vibrant contemporary art scene, sent tourist art – traditional-style scrolls showing bathing beauties – and Yugoslavia sent skilled but inappropriate illustrations for children's storybooks! Until the Triennale defines its character and seizes the authority to shape its content according to a curatorial purpose, it will have some of the character of a jumble sale.

Another important event on the contemporary art scene was the eloquent presentation made by distinguished art critic Geeta Kapur and eminent film historian Ashish Rajadhyaksha on their exhibition, *Bombay/Mumbai*. This was one of nine segments that made up a mega-show at the Tate Modern in London. The show, *Century City*, was the Tate Modern's first large thematic exhibition and it invited guest curators from different parts of the globe to explore creativity in the modern metropolis – choosing a city and a time period within the 20th century. The cities included were Paris and Vienna in the early decades, Moscow from the Revolution till Stalin, Rio in the '50s and



Plan of Mangalore by Lafitte de Brassier, 1778. 715 x 480 mm. France, Archives nationales, CAOM DFC, Indes orientales, 30B 175.

'60s, Lagos just after Nigerian independence in '55, New York and Tokyo in the early '70s, and London and Mumbai of the '90s. The three themes that the Mumbai section was to explore were popular Bombay film and the visual culture it creates, the acute pressures on housing and habitation, and the increasingly communalized atmosphere in the city since the 1992 riots. Despite the grave intentions, there was no mistaking the celebration of vitality that pulsed through the show, with stunning and inventive works by Atul Dodiya, Bhupen Khakhar, Dayanita Singh, Rummana Husain, Sharmila Samant, Sudarshan Shetty, Vivan Sundaram, and many other artists. In the curators' presentation, *Bombay/Mumbai* came across as raucous, vibrant, untamed, and profligate, with dreams of success driving thousands through lives of amazing privation.

From a different time and a different place, but also offering insights into the way cities grow was *Chitra*: an exhibition of 18th-century maps and drawings of cities and monuments in India from French archives. The exhibition was curated by well-known historian Jean-Marie Lafont and the French Cultural Attache, Laurent de Gaulle; it was elegantly installed in the National Museum by a team of students and faculty from

the Exhibition Design Department of the NID. It was accompanied by a beautifully produced catalogue by the curators, and OUP simultaneously released a book on the subject by Dr Lafont.

Marking different stages in French travels and settlements on the subcontinent, the maps offered a fascinating record of changes over time. In the Pondicherry section, for instance, successive exhibits showed the site acquiring fortifications, a governor's palace, and other public edifices. Some drawings are valuable records of monuments that have vanished since, such as the Mahtab Bagh gardens in Delhi's Red Fort and the English fort at Shingelpet. The maps were made as utilitarian objects but to today's viewer they are aesthetically ravishing, delicately tinted and scattered with sweet ideograms that suggest lush villages and boat-filled seas. The exhibition also highlighted the nature of the French presence in India, whose trading posts never grew into full-scale colonies. According to the curators this was an ideological choice, motivated by respect for India that made its subjugation unpalatable to the French people. The final section of the show brought together portraits of the many French military officers who worked for Indian princely states and were

responsible for modernizing their armies. An elegant, attractive, and informative exhibition, *Chitra* provided both knowledge and pleasure and its organizers deserve congratulation.

EVENTS COVERED

X Triennale – India: January 22 – February 21, 2001, organized by the Lalit Kala Akademi at the Rabindra Bhavan Galleries, the National Gallery of Modern Art, the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society.

Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis. February 1 – April 29, 2001, Tate Modern, London. Presentation in Delhi on February 14 at the British Council Division Auditorium.

Chitra: 18th-century Maps and Drawings of Cities and Monuments of India in French Archives. December 18, 2000 – January 21, 2001, organized by the Embassy of France in India, the National Museum, and the Alliance Francaise de Delhi, at the National Museum.

NEWSLETTER FROM MUMBAI

Monisha Ahmed

"A living culture has collapsed, and needs to be understood in its totality, and not merely as a collection of structures. The spirit of its people is its greatest conservation resource."¹

All of us have heard about the earthquake that devastated a large part of Gujarat on January 26, 2001. The epicentre of the quake was 25 kilometres northeast of Bhuj, the district capital of Kutch. The city of Bhuj was virtually flattened, as were most other major towns in Kutch. The loss of lives was tremendous, homes were destroyed, and the damage to buildings irreversible.

The evening before the earthquake in Kutch, I was sitting at the British Council listening to Dr Eiluned Edwards (Research Fellow, Faculty of Art and Design, PRASADA – Practice Research and

Advancement in South Asian Design and Architecture, De Montfort University, Leicester) speak about the embroidered textiles of the Rabaris of Kutch. It seemed ironic then to wake up the next morning and hear about the tragic earthquake and know that some of the artisans Dr Edwards spoke about had lost their lives. Those who survived would have lost family members, their homes, and sources of income.

From the fabled *ajrakh* block printers of Dhamadka to the painted terracotta craftsmen who claim their lineage from Harappan potters, Kutch hosts one of India's richest concentrations of craftspeople. It is claimed that there are more national awardees in the field of craft from Kutch, than any other part of the country.² Consequently, the tragedy in

Kutch has come to be perceived as an "art quake".³

We are all familiar with the exquisite art and architecture of Kutch, and many of us may have read Marg's *The Arts of Kutch*, edited by Christopher London, published last year. Probably the best known of Kutch's arts are its textiles, which range from embroidered fabrics to printed, tie-dyed, and woven pieces. It is presumably not inaccurate to say that no crafts bazaar in India is complete without the ubiquitous presence of bright and colourful fabrics from Kutch, and that no book on Indian textiles can exclude those from Kutch.

The question on most people's minds is, what of the plight of the artisans of Kutch? Many of them are displaced, and almost all of them will have to rebuild



Aina Mahal, Bhuj, February 2001. Photograph courtesy INTACH, Delhi.

their homes and reconstruct their lives.

The Kala Raksha Trust has lost ten artisans, but surprisingly the Trust's building in Bhuj, which houses a small museum and resource centre, was not damaged though very near the epicentre. Perhaps it is because the building was constructed in the traditional *bhunga* (mud hut) Kutchi style. However, the fate of Shrujan, another crafts organization, has been otherwise. Located at Bhujodi, near Bhuj, the organization was housed in a modern structure that sustained major damage. Fortunately no one was hurt. Shrujan has also been able to salvage almost all their textiles. As Bharatiben said, "After all, textiles don't break, they may get dirty but we can always clean them." The fate of other non-government organizations (NGOs), such as Banascraft, Seva, Dastkar, Sohan, and Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan that work with craftspeople, is similar.

A frequent visitor to Mumbai for many years now, Wazirbhai, collector and dealer of Bhuj is known to many of us who collect textiles. Fortunately, he says that almost all of his exquisite collection, for

which he hopes to build a museum one day, is safe. A reason for this could be that it was not all housed in one place, but stored in several different homes.

Three months after the earthquake the artisans are, quite literally, picking up the threads of their lives. "They want work, not hand-outs and subsidies," says Judy Frater from Kala Raksha Trust. Her sentiments are echoed by other NGOs, who have also taken the initiative and are mobilizing funds to provide workshops, looms, and tool kits. The NGOs are working towards making available continuing employment and security along with sustained earnings to their artisans. They fear if they do not do this then many artisans may turn to manual labour at construction sites to make urgently needed money.

Many of the NGOs have already held exhibitions in the major cities of India, based on the stocks they could salvage and which they now have no place to store. The money from these sales will go towards rehabilitation projects for their craftspeople. Buying has been fervent, as most people fear it will be at least another

year before crafts from Kutch appear on the scene again. And then the quality may not be as good. Shrujan comments that while they have given out work to many women, because of the prevailing situation they will not be able to control quality. Nevertheless, the purpose is to emphasize the feeling of self-reliance of the Kutchi artisans by providing them with immediate self-employment and restoring their income generating capacity. Another major strategy being taken up by NGOs, along with architects, is to generate employment by mobilizing communities connected with building crafts.

The Old Bhuj settlement has collapsed, so have the Chhatris of Lakhpatji, and the Aina Mahal Museum is severely damaged. What has happened to Kutch's built heritage? It is not foremost in people's minds right now because as Hanvant Singh, Chairman of the Aina Mahal Trust, says, "We are more concerned with human lives rather than saving art objects and heritage buildings. We will come to that later."

"It was an earthquake waiting to happen," said Dr V. Subramanyan,



Prag Mahal, Bhuj,
February 2001.
Photograph courtesy
INTACH, Delhi.

Professor of Geology, Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai. "For a long time now, we have all known that Kutch is vulnerable and we could have done something to reinforce the historic buildings." Professor Subramanyan was part of a task force that had been constituted by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) to make an assessment of the damage to heritage properties in the earthquake-devastated areas of Gujarat, especially Kutch. Their initial summary of the situation in Kutch states that "almost every historical building of any significance in Kutch was found to have collapsed or been damaged."⁴

INTACH surveyed over 220 buildings (the existing list of protected heritage structures included 123) and every building was found to have been affected. The main cause of the damage was faulty design elements; another was poor soil conditions. Though the stone used in most of the buildings was strong, the binding material was weak.

That was in February, and in the months since, INTACH has held several workshops and meetings to assess the situation and discuss what immediate steps should be taken, as well as look at ways of raising financial resources. The first short-term strategy INTACH has recommended is the enforcement of immediate guidelines for debris management and area conservation, identification of funding mechanisms to present clear options to communities, activation of a monitoring system on structures studied, and taking account of factors such as the summer heat in immediate plans for shelter. It has also drawn up guidelines for management of cultural properties in disaster-affected areas. Probably the most urgent measure to be taken is to prop up the buildings to prevent any further damage from aftershocks.

It is interesting to note that the only heritage building insured in Kutch is the Aina Mahal Palace, a museum since 1977.



However, only the museum's collection is insured, not the building. Built by Maharao Lakhpatji in the 1750s, the floors of the palace interior were made with blue delftware tiles, the white marble walls were covered with mirrors each separated by gilded ornamental frames, and elaborate Venetian pendant candelabras and chandeliers were suspended from the ceilings.⁵

The museum collection consists of exquisite costumes, European ceramics, furniture, mechanical clocks, Chinese glass paintings, and associated material representative of court life in Kutch in the late 18th and 19th centuries.⁶

In a message to some friends in the art world soon after the earthquake, Pramod Jethi, Curator of the Museum, wrote, "Aina Mahal is structurally badly affected... some walls have fallen. The mirrors are safe but twenty per cent of the artefacts are damaged. The second floor Darbar Hall is mostly in ruins. Many items are also damaged (furniture)."⁷

The damaged items include the suite of 19th-century gild-wood chairs and almost all the glass artefacts. Surprisingly though, the Hall of Mirrors from which the palace derives its name, has survived with few losses. So too have the Maharao's gem-studded shield and sword, his golden-legged bed, the ivory inlaid

Kutch Museum, Bhuj,
February 2001. Photograph:
V. Subramanyan.

doors made in 1708, as well as the miniature silver and enamelwork tree made in the late 18th or early 19th century.⁸

The contents of the museum have been removed and are being stored in the Sharadbaug Palace. They will return only once the Aina Mahal is restored. Meanwhile heavy security is maintained around the building, to prevent trespassers and theft.

The fate of the adjoining Prag Mahal Palace, designed by Henry St Clair Wilkins in 1865 for Rao Pragmalji, has been similar. The Italian-Gothic style building has lost many of its parapets and suffered severe stone dislocations. In addition, its 300-year-old royal library has collapsed. In the Kutch Museum, in existence since 1877, most of the exhibits are feared ruined. These include artefacts dating back to the Harappan age, a 7th-century statue of Buddha, an 18th-century cannon gifted and inscribed by Tipu Sultan, as well as 17th-century miniature paintings, jewellery, and wooden art objects.

INTACH also found that the earthquake was providing a convenient cover for attempts to remove important historical sections of structures that are relatively undamaged and easily restorable, in the name of public safety.⁹

Theft is another matter that concerns the residents of Kutch. "Scavengers" have already begun working in Kutch to see what they can find in the debris and rubble. It has been rumoured that soon after the earthquake the antique markets in Ahmadabad were flooded with architectural pieces from Kutch; brass and other metallic artefacts from the region are widely available at Ahmadabad's weekly Sunday market, held beside Ellis Bridge. Reminiscent of the drought in 1969, many people in Kutch have begun to sell their textile and jewellery heirlooms. NGOs have been trying to intervene and prevent this, but it has not always been possible.

Other dilemmas remain. A debate is underway as to whether a "new" Bhuj

should be built or the "old" Bhuj restored. The town was built in 1510 by Maharao Hamir, after whom the lake in the town is named. The fort wall, over 18 metres high and nearly 2 metres wide, came up in 1723. While the fortwall is by and large intact, the town it was meant to protect has been razed to the ground. However, the residents of Bhuj have shown a strong commitment to their location and roots. They are adamant that they will not move, and have demanded that the government rebuild Old Bhuj.

The earthquake has created an upheaval in everyone's life. At the same time, a tremendous amount of aid has flooded the district. However, much of this has been misappropriated or unfairly distributed. Exclusion from relief and rehabilitation programmes has been reported by sections of artisans, especially Muslims and Dalits.¹⁰

Support to Kutch's craftspeople has been forthcoming. In Mumbai, the artist community held a raffle of over 150 paintings at the National Gallery of Modern Art, and the proceeds of this went to the Kala Raksha Trust. Concern India held an auction of paintings, organized by Christie's. Similar efforts have been going on in other parts of the country. But financial assistance to restore the heritage buildings has not been that readily forthcoming. For a cash-strapped government the first priority is the rehabilitation of the quake-affected. Instead, owners of heritage properties, including the Archaeological Survey of India, are looking to corporate sponsorship, as well as the World Bank and World Monuments Fund to assist them with their restoration plans.

At a busy corner of a suburb in north Mumbai, a group of women from Kutch hang their embroidered pieces on the fencing of a public park. The work is coarse and hurriedly done, the stitches thick, the embroidery clumsy. But the women say they must sell what they can, quality is not foremost in their minds right now. They have to send the money back

to their families in what is left of Kutch, to rebuild their homes and their lives.

The question on everybody's mind now is how to protect themselves from the searing heat of summer, which will be followed by the torrential monsoons. And the tremors continue to be felt in Kutch...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Dr V. Subramanyan, INTACH (Delhi and Mumbai), and Divay Gupta.

NOTES

- 1 Ashok Chaterjee, coordinator for INTACH, February 18, 2001, Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmadabad.
- 2 Gauri Bhatia, "Erasure and After", *Outlook*, February 19, 2001, pp. 50–51.
- 3 Sadanand Menon, "An Artquake in Kutch", *Asian Age*, February 6, 2001.
- 4 Ashok Chaterjee, op. cit.
- 5 P.J. Jethi and C.W. London, "A glorious heritage: Maharao Lakhpatji and the Aina Mahal", in *The Arts of Kutch*, edited by C.W. London, Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2000, pp. 48–61.
- 6 Ibid., p. 54.
- 7 Message dated March 5, 2001.
- 8 See chapters on the Aina Mahal in *The Arts of Kutch*, op. cit., pp. 48–75, for visuals of the artefacts mentioned here.
- 9 Press release, INTACH Gujarat Initiative, February 19, 2001.
- 10 Teesta Setalvad, "Split Wide Open", *Communalism Combat*, February 2001, pp. 8–17.

NEWSLETTER FROM LONDON

John Siudmak

The musée Guimet, the French national museum of Asiatic art, finally reopened its doors in mid-January, after a long period of closure for renovation (the renovation project was outlined by Kavita Singh in *Marg*, 51/1, September 1999). The new installation is hugely popular with the public with long queues throughout the day. What impresses immediately is the cleverly created feeling of space and openness. The circular vestibule below the rotunda leads up to the main entrance hall, which is framed by two huge staircases that spiral upwards and downwards at either side to the first floor and basement level. This opens directly onto the main hall on the ground floor, which is two storeys high. A large opening framed by narrower openings in both side walls and a wide opening in the end wall give onto adjacent galleries. Above three sets of open double windows look out from the first floor galleries. Thus almost wherever the visitor stands, there is a view into other parts of the museum and glimpses of their display. The ceiling of the main hall is glazed providing a source of natural light, which is percolated through thin cotton screens. Otherwise the lighting is supplied by spotlights. As in most modern displays the walls of the ground floor galleries are either white or bluish-grey, the floors paved in a grey limestone, though here the monotony was relieved by the scale of the objects and the diversity of the architectural design. The next main impression is the sheer quantity of material on display, and the large scale of many of the objects. The larger objects are mounted on grey blocks, while smaller objects are shown in glass cases set against the walls, often

crammed together. While the new display area has not substantially increased, there is now more and improved space for the huge reserve collection of over 40,000 objects. The main floor of the old library in the rotunda still retains some of its bookshelves, but is now used to display Indian miniature paintings, while a gallery on the second floor shows Japanese

Huge multi-headed Naga held by five-headed Shiva figure and attendant, with view of staircase. Bayon period, 13th century. Musée Guimet, Paris. Photograph courtesy RMN.



woodblock prints. There is a new library with modern facilities. The Jean and Krishna Riboud gallery outside the rotunda displays Indian textiles, tiles, jewellery, and decorative items donated by the late Krishna Riboud.

The main hall contains the early part of the museum's incomparable collection of Cambodian sculpture, much of which can be recognized from the exhibition held several years ago at the Grand Palais in Paris, which also showed in Tokyo and Osaka, discussed by this reviewer earlier in these columns. The visitor is greeted by a colossal image of a multi-headed Naga held by a five-headed Shiva and attendant. This was lying for years in the museum's storeroom, and was assembled with rebuilt missing parts especially for the new display. To the side of the Naga, the left-hand staircase can be seen, while looking down through the main hall the viewer sees one masterpiece after another. In the right-hand gallery, more Cambodia sculpture is shown together with that of Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, and finally Vietnam in a rear gallery. In the left-hand gallery Indian sculptures, mostly stone and south Indian bronzes are displayed.

Though the museum is surprisingly poorly represented in Pala and other north Indian medieval sculpture, it is very strong in examples of the Andhra school and south Indian sculpture, most of these sculptures acquired through the agency or as a gift of the great pre-war dealer C.T. Loo and the archaeologist and historian Jouveau-Dubreuil. Amongst the bronzes is a superb recently acquired Kashmir group of Sugatisamdarshana-Lokeshvara. An attractively priced catalogue of the sculpture collection is available, printed to coincide with the re-opening (*Sculptures indiennes du musée Guimet*, Amina Okada, RMN, Paris, 2000, F.fr. 290).

The Buddhist art of Gandhara, Afghanistan, and Central Asia is shown on the second floor in narrow galleries around the well overlooking the main gallery, the previous old-fashioned atmospheric display replaced by a modern repetitive one. The collection of Gandharan art is surprisingly weak given the pioneering work of Foucher in this field. However, the art of Afghanistan is particularly well represented as a result of the activities of the French archaeological mission there over many seasons. The

collection comprises the Begram treasure of glass and the famous ivories, fresco work from Kakrak, terracotta sculpture from Fondukistan, and stucco and terracotta sculpture from Hadda, as well as many examples of Buddhist sculpture in late Gandharan style in grey schist. Apart from art objects mercifully – in hindsight – looted from the Kabul museum, now scattered in collections in Japan, Europe, and America, this is the only significant collection of the pre-Islamic art of Afghanistan left in the world today following the recent destruction by the Taliban of the Bamiyan rock-cut Buddha sculptures and “all moveable art”. Information had just come to the Guimet museum authorities on the day of this reviewer's visit that fragments of the two Bamiyan Buddha images were being offered for sale in Peshawar by an official Afghan government agent. The art of Central Asia is also particularly strong with material from the Pelliot expedition as well as paintings from Turfan presented by von le Coq. An adjacent gallery houses the collection of Nepalese and Tibetan art, enriched by the generous Fournier gift of 1990, while the rest of the building



Felt carpet embroidered with silk, 1st century BCE, tomb of Wu Shuliu, 265 x 96 cm. National Museum of History of Mongolia, Ulan Bator. Photograph courtesy RMN.



Atul Dodiya, "Missing I, II, III", 2000, detail of triptych painted on metal roller shutters and laminated boards. Photograph courtesy of the artist.

houses the extensive Chinese and Japanese collections.

More or less coinciding with the re-opening was an excellent exhibition of nomadic art of Central Asia, *l'Asie des steppes d'Alexandre le Grand à Genghis Khan* (February 3 – April 2). There were 180 works of art including horse trappings, textiles, jewellery, arms, silverware, paintings, and coins representing 1,500 years of the culture of ancient nomadic peoples such as the Scythians and the Xiongnu as well as

sedentary populations who inhabited the region stretching from the shores of the Black Sea up to the Yellow River in China. The exhibits were drawn from the Guimet's own reserves supplemented by loans from the Hermitage, including items from the collection of Peter the Great, the Academy of Science of Ulan Bator (capital of Mongolia), and material recently excavated by the Chinese in Inner Mongolia. A famous embroidered felt carpet found in 1925 was reunited for the first time in the exhibition. It was

discovered in the necropolis of Noin Ula, in the tomb of Wu Shuliu (the emperor of the Xiongnu confederation), and divided between the Hermitage and the National Museum of History of Mongolia. The lower part belonging to the Mongolian museum is shown here. Other important loans included three of the famous Sogdian wall paintings from Panjikent discovered by archaeological missions organized by the Hermitage in the 1950s. The exhibition travels on to Madrid, where it will be on show from April 25 to

July 1, 2001. There is a well illustrated catalogue, which was sold out by the end of the exhibition.

The Tate Modern held a large-scale exhibition entitled *Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis*, which examined the city as a source and focus of artistic energy and inspiration in the 20th century (February 1 – April 29, 2001). Nine different cities were represented at different points of time, critical for their artistic development, with selections of art in different media. The nine cities chosen were Paris 1908–18, Vienna 1908–18, Moscow 1916–30, Rio de Janeiro 1950–64, Lagos 1955–70, Tokyo 1967–73, New York 1969–74, Mumbai 1992–2001, and London 1990–2001, each selection made by a different curator or group of curators. The exhibition was not entirely successful in characterizing and bringing to life key elements of the artistic life of these cities at the selected time, and as an exhibition it lacked coherency. New York and London were particularly disappointing, Vienna perhaps the most successful with abundant references to the distinctive architecture and design of the period, to Freud and his theories, and the *angst*-ridden compositions of Schiele and Kokoschka. *Bombay/Mumbai – transforming the city*, curated by Geeta Kapur and Ashish Rajadhyaksha, ran a close second (see also the Delhi newsletter in this magazine). Photographs by Raghubir Singh and Sooni Taraporevala evoked the traditional rich ethnic composition of the city and its daily life. The communal riots of 1992/3 are taken as the starting point. The polarization and painful soul-searching that followed inspires several of the works of art. Three installations by different artists deal with the anguish and horror. In "Between Memory and History" Navjot Altaf uses a room with monitors to show footage of the riots while at the entrance a metal mesh panel is threaded with pieces of rolled-up paper containing the testimony of those who witnessed them. Rummana Hussain's "Space for Healing" is

a mixture of shrine and hospital with rows of stretchers covered each with a cloth suggestive of the *lehaaf* on Muslim tombs. Vivan Sundaram uses the newspaper photograph of a man lying dead in the street in his assembly "Memorial". However, the most dominant theme throughout is the influence of the film industry and its poster art, the garish unreality somehow transcending the city's problems. Thus the bright acrylic colours and bold images of many of the paintings like those of the artist Atul Dodiya, who executed a series of paintings of himself and siblings, modern historical figures, and film personalities painted on roller shop shutters. The influence reaches its apotheosis in the three huge hanging cut-out figures, by Bhupen Khakhar. There is even a shanty cinema, "Pandal", with a hoarding of the recent Bollywood movie *Fiza* set in the riots, which was especially created for the exhibition by the architect Sen Kapadia.

NEWSLETTER FROM THE USA

Donald M. Stadtner

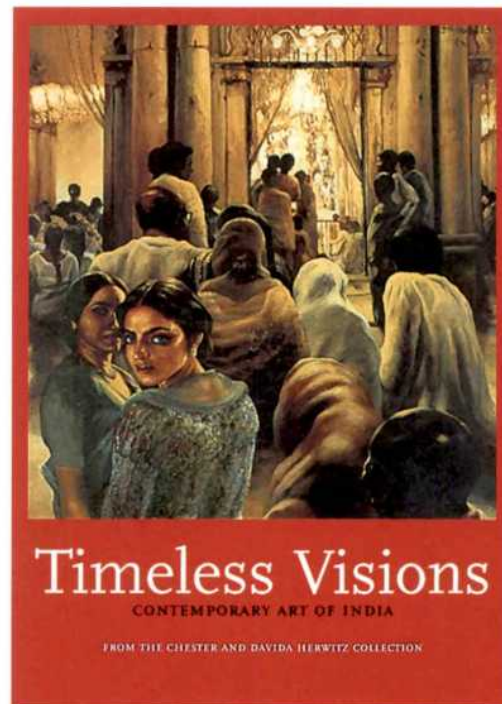
The eastern seaboard of the United States began the first year of the new millennium bristling with activity focusing on the Indian subcontinent. In the nation's capital was an exhibition of early Indian photographs, while in Salem, Massachusetts, a major private collection of contemporary Indian art was gifted to the Peabody Essex Museum. These two events signal the continuing enthusiasm that Indian art has generated over the last several decades worldwide. Indeed, India is now irrevocably "on the radar screen" in the North American cultural scene.

This single donation to the Peabody Essex Museum belonged to a passionate collector and patron, the late Chester Herwitz, and his widow, Davida. The gift encompasses over 850 works by nearly seventy of the country's leading artists, including such recognized masters as M.F. Husain and S.H. Raza. Coupled with this is a one million dollar bequest designated for exhibitions, publications, public programming, and scholarships. Many of the works were included in an important exhibition, *Timeless Visions: Contemporary Art of India*, which the museum launched in 1999 and which travelled nationally. A catalogue of the exhibition by Susan S. Bean, Curator, Department of South Asian and Korean Art and Culture, is now available in India. It features thirteen artists whose selected works though perhaps rooted in the Indian experience are universally relevant.

Chester and Davida began acquiring contemporary Indian painting in the late 1960s before it became the rage that it is today. At the same time they nurtured painters whose talents had not yet been widely recognized. For example, Gieve

Patel reminisced recently, "Chester would visit my studio every year. His purchases literally kept me going and allowed me to continue working in the early part of my career. He recognized earlier than most that something exceptional was happening in Indian contemporary art and he risked supporting it." Some of the most significant works include paintings from Raza's *bindu* series and Husain's *Mahabharata*. Other artists whose works on canvas and paper that are part of the bequest include Laxma Goud, Jogen Chowdhury, Nalini Malani, Bhupen Khakhar, and Arpita Singh. The creations of younger painters were not overlooked, such as Atul Dodiya, Rekha Rodwittiya, and Ravinder Reddy. Taking the long view, this acquisition "is potentially as radical and significant as the decision of the museums in the Boston area in the 19th century to make a serious commitment to collecting classical arts of Asia," remarked Dr Vishakha Desai, Senior Vice President and Galleries Director of the Asia Society, New York. As a measure of the museum's commitment to modern Indian art, the Herwitz collection will be permanently exhibited in a newly designed gallery that is scheduled for completion by the beginning of 2003.

In Washington, DC, a major exhibition of old Indian photographs opened on December 2, 2000 at the Sackler Gallery, one of our national museums located on the Mall, and an institution devoted to the arts of Asia. The American interest in early Indian photography started in earnest with a popular travelling exhibition organized in 1976 by the Asia Society in New York, *In the Last Empire: Photography in British India, 1855–1911*. Other



exhibitions and books on the same subject followed. This fascination with the early photographic history of India piggy-backed on the research devoted to the development of European photography that swept art history departments in America in the 1970s. Books and articles by leading academic gurus on "the politics of photography", notably Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (1979) and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), assured the new discipline a respectful position on campuses in the first wave of "political correctness". In this view, British photography in India was a cousin to Company painting and both were tainted with imperialism and cultural voyeurism. *The New York Times* review of the exhibition dutifully steps in line with this late 20th-century dogma: "The British appear cool and collected enough in front of the camera but once behind it they nervously measure and poke and prod India as if it were some morphological

specimen that they were itching to disarm and pin down." (December 1, 2000, page B31). Photography, then, was another gun in the English armoury used to subjugate India. In this view there is little room for nostalgia, yet ironically this recent period is arguably most richly experienced by its photographic images. Thankfully, this new important catalogue and exhibition of early Indian photographs at the Sackler Gallery in Washington, DC does not go down that same simple self-righteous and moralistic road but explores the subject from a variety of fresh and sympathetic perspectives. Responsible for setting this positive tone is the organizer of the exhibition and editor of the catalogue, Vidya Dehejia, Deputy Director and Chief Curator of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the Freer Gallery of Art. Indeed, it was her discerning selection of six contributors that assures the catalogue *India through the Lens: Photography 1840–1911* "instant classic" status.

The show included over 130 photographs, the majority of which have never before been exhibited publicly. The focus was on the formative phase of photography in India, between 1840 and 1911. The former date marks the year when the first daguerreotype camera was available for sale in Calcutta, scarcely twelve months after its introduction in Europe. Photography grew in popularity so quickly that photo societies started up in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, only some fifteen years after the first camera was introduced. The essays, including an introduction by Dehejia, range over a wide variety of topics. In her separate essay she delves into the lives of individual rajas whose hobbies included photography. The well-known author Charles Allen treats the role of photography in recording Indian royalty and in a second essay he analyses the photographic impact of the two great Delhi durbars of 1903 and 1911. Other essays cover individual photographers, both foreign (Samuel Bourne and Felice Beato) and indigenous (Raja Deen Dayal).



Cover image of the Lake Palace, Udaipur by Colin Murray, c. 1871–72, from *India through the Lens*.

Indian photography was also highlighted on the other side of the Atlantic with an exhibition of fifty important works by the celebrated Raja Deen Dayal (b. 1844) at the Rossi and Rossi gallery in London (April 5–28). Deen Dayal was employed first by Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, and then patronized by the Nizam of Hyderabad.

India through the Lens is handsomely produced, with numerous full-page illustrations and many panoramic views on doublespreads. A faint grey sepia tints the colour of each page with slightly darker chapter titles, enhancing the photographs yet remaining unobtrusive.

While the catalogue stands as a testament to this major exhibition of Indian photographs which closed on March 25, 2001 at the Sackler, we can all look forward to a permanent exhibition of contemporary Indian art at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem.

ACCOMPANYING PUBLICATIONS

Timeless Visions: Contemporary Art of India from the Chester and Davida Herwitz Collection, by Susan S. Bean. Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, distributed in India by Mapin Publishing, Ahmedabad, 96 pages, 57 colour illustrations. Rs 495.

India through the Lens: Photography 1840–1911, edited by Vidya Dehejia. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC and Mapin Publishing, Ahmedabad, 2000. 318 pages, 220 photographs reproduced in 4-colour sepia. Rs 3000.

BOOK REVIEWS

***Kalighat Painting: Images from a Changing World* by Jyotindra Jain.**
Mapin Publishing, Ahmedabad, 1999.
232 pages, 181 illustrations. Rs 2000.

Jyotindra Jain's book on Kalighat painting is a landmark in the study of Indian folk and popular arts. Not only does the book offer new facts and interpretations regarding Kalighat *pats*, but it makes a number of methodological points that are applicable to the field as a whole. This is what one would expect of the author, who is Senior Director of the Crafts Museum in New Delhi. Through his innovative approach as a museum director, and his many publications and exhibitions, Jain has established himself as the foremost authority in the field in his generation. In recent writings, he has also been raising significant issues of the ethics and politics of dealing with "lesser" art traditions (and their makers) in anthropology, art history, and national life.

Kalighat Painting is the most lavishly illustrated and well-produced volume on the subject so far. For that reason alone, it would have established itself as an essential reference. But this book

combines visual appeal with seriousness of text. Jain's book is far from being a coffee-table introduction to Kalighat painting: it is a scholarly monograph that assumes its audience has acquainted itself with the basics of the subject, and it devotes itself to an investigation of key issues that have been raised by earlier writers.

Among the important studies on the subject are W.G. Archer's three publications, which are mainly concerned with stylistic evolution, and Hana Knizkova's monograph, which attempts a social history. For bazaar art, Kalighat is again unusual in being so thoroughly studied and well represented and preserved within art institutions. How did these modest watercolours, made by the thousand for sale to pilgrims and visitors to Kolkata's Kalighat temple, come to be this uncommonly well-documented genre? How does the Kalighat phenomenon differ from 18th- and 19th-century genre paintings that also reflect on urban and political realities, such as, say the Company school paintings produced in Tanjore and Madurai? And what does the Kalighat tradition stand for within our historiography?

It is not easy to answer these questions, but Kalighat *pats* differ from other coeval traditions in their social location, the range of their subjects, and the quality of form. While works from Company schools and related bazaar styles might be said to reflect their contemporary world, they were made to order for a class of foreign patrons that wished to have its experiences recorded. In contrast, the Kalighat artists were making bazaar paintings for a local audience. The artists, much of their subject matter, and their clientele were all embedded in the same social context. This gives the practice of Kalighat painting its particular pungency as an "authentic"

expression arising from within the first Indian metropolis.

The range of subjects in Kalighat *pats* is wide: from religious icons to "pin-up girls" to genre scenes and still lives; the illustration of contemporary events, scandals, and theatrical performances; social satires on the moral corruption of current times; to the delightful illustrations of proverbs in which muskrats run wild or "vegetarian" cats pounce on unsuspecting prawns. The style of Kalighat painting is also unusual within Indian popular painting and has aroused especial interest. At root, it derives from an idiom shared by several folk-Bengali arts, but the pressure of producing in large volumes for their urban market led the Kalighat painters away from the laboriously detailed finish that is usually prized in India. Instead, the finest Kalighat artists developed a style of speedy watercolour painting in which a masterly use of calligraphic line and the softest swells of colour wash produced astonishingly effective, and amazingly modern works. These formal qualities stimulated scholarly interest in the paintings, though this interest was to some extent fuelled by the belief that the Kalighat style derived from European watercolours – a theory largely dismissed by Jain.

Jain's book begins with a chapter on "The Genesis of Kalighat Painting" in which he argues against the two "origin" theories that earlier writers have offered: that the Kalighat style developed when folk artists saw chiaroscuro in European paintings and prints, or that it developed when village scroll-painters adapted to an urban market. Instead he points to the close conjunction of clay modelling and painting on paper in Bengal: the *patuas* who make scroll paintings also make clay images for sale; and the *kumor* potters who make clay icons but also paint paper

Kalighat Painting *Images from a Changing World*



surrounds for them. Both of these communities – *patuas* and *kumors* – came to produce Kalighat *pats*, and for both, the experience of making three-dimensional, modelled forms, Jain argues, was crucial to their interest in conveying mass and swelling volumes in their two-dimensional paintings. Juxtaposing painted clay images and Kalighat painting, Jain shows clearly how the same flicks of colour are used on the clay figure and the *pat* painting to intensify a sense of depth and volume. In this chapter, Jain also puts forward evidence suggesting that a group of *sutradhars* or carpenters also painted some Kalighat *pats*; moreover he suggests a particular idiom – more laboured, with exaggerated light and shade effects – as theirs, on the basis of other drawings originally acquired from *sutradhars*. The book thus establishes that there were multiple artisan-groups who were Kalighat painters, and suggests the different stylistic strands that may be ascribable to each group.

In his next chapter, “Recasting the Imagery of Kalighat Painting”, Jain demonstrates the close relationship between Kalighat painting and other contemporary visual presentations and documents, particularly theatre and photography. The famous scandal in which a young woman was first seduced by the *mahant* of the Tarakeshwar temple and then murdered by her enraged husband, is a popular narrative subject in Kalighat painting. Analysing the narrative sequence of the paintings, Jain establishes that it was a theatrical script based on the event, rather than the news reports or the legal transcripts, that provided the text for the Kalighat paintings. Jain creates a picture of a thriving urban culture, in which cross-fertilization occurred between artists, performers, and writers at the popular level.

In the following chapter, “Historical Understanding of the Kalighat Genre”, Jain engages with the issue of dating Kalighat paintings. There is reason to believe that the Kalighat phenomenon flourished for

about 100 years, from about 1830 to about 1930. Within that period, however, is it possible to establish phases of the style, and then be able to date works based on their stylistic qualities? This was the core of Archer’s project; periods of development were dependent, for him, on the degree of finesse with which artists handled shading. But Jain amasses documentary evidence for some “late” style paintings to have been produced early, and “early” style paintings to have been made late. Variations in style, he points out, may be due to differences between the groups of artists, who may be *patuas* or *sutradhars* or *kumors* from different districts. Moreover, the paintings were made workshop-style, with senior artists providing the initial drawings and the final contour line, and juniors and women filling the colours. In this situation, qualitative difference cannot be equated with evolving artistic skill. As he says, “...contrasting and continually fluctuating factors were at work in the making of the Kalighat idiom; ...In a fluid situation such as this, and in the absence of more definitively dated evidence, any attempt at devising imaginary stylistic periods would be futile” (p. 160). This is an important corrective to what is practically an art-historical reflex, where establishing chronology is considered the chief task of the field, and the organic evolution of style is assumed to be a universal, smooth process. Finally, in the chapter “Articulation of the Pictorial Language”, Jain discusses some formal elements of the paintings: the kinds of shading one sees within them; the use of stock figural types; and the thrifty narrative.

The book significantly adds to our knowledge of the Kalighat idiom in the close analysis of form; in the identification of new artist-groups; in the firm location of Kalighat painting within Calcutta’s popular milieu. In showing the futility of “stylistic-development” studies in a hybrid and fluid situation, it makes a valuable methodological point, as it does when it shows the errors of interpretation that

occur when we look to inappropriate texts to explain our images.

It is the sheer depth of the study, however, that is one of its most significant attributes. Until recently, the “lesser”, “folk” and “bazaar” traditions have received only cursory attention. Usually taking the form of surveys or overviews, earlier studies have tended to assume that whole traditions can be adequately represented through small samples. No complexity is admitted, across individual makers or across time; accordingly, no complexity is deemed to exist. In contrast, our greater valuation of “high” art plays out in the earnestness with which we attend to it and much ink is spilled over minor points. By deploying the method and the gravity of “high” studies, Jain dignifies his subject and demands that serious attention be paid to it. He painstakingly dismantles facile structures to reveal the unruly complexity that throbs beneath; he evokes artistic subjectivities and an operating intelligence, as he shows the works of a known artist, or tries to evoke the mental process of an unknown one, as in this passage: “The magic of clear and lucent watercolour completely captured the imagination of the Kalighat artist...he began to see the immense possibilities of graduated hues leading to discovery of shade and light, not as a natural phenomenon but as something that could emanate from his brush and be at his command” (p. 175).

Kalighat Painting is only one among Jain’s recent publications that manifests his larger project to bring to bear on the “lesser” traditions the kinds of studies that will reveal their true depth, richness, and complexity. Prior to this book, Jain published *Ganga Devi* (Mapin, 1997) which was probably the first monograph devoted to an Indian folk artist, in this case an extraordinary painter from Mithila. More recently, Jain curated *Other Masters* (Crafts Museum, 1998) in which the works of five renowned “folk” artists were shown, subjected to the same curatorial

devices (biography, formative works, evolving style, artist's statement) used for classical and contemporary art.

Acknowledging the richness of the book, this reviewer would like to make two points: first, the often complex arguments put forward might have been easier to follow if the chapters had been divided into shorter subsections; second, that in the absence of a conclusion, the book's ending is abrupt. But these are minor quibbles with what is clearly a major work on the subject.

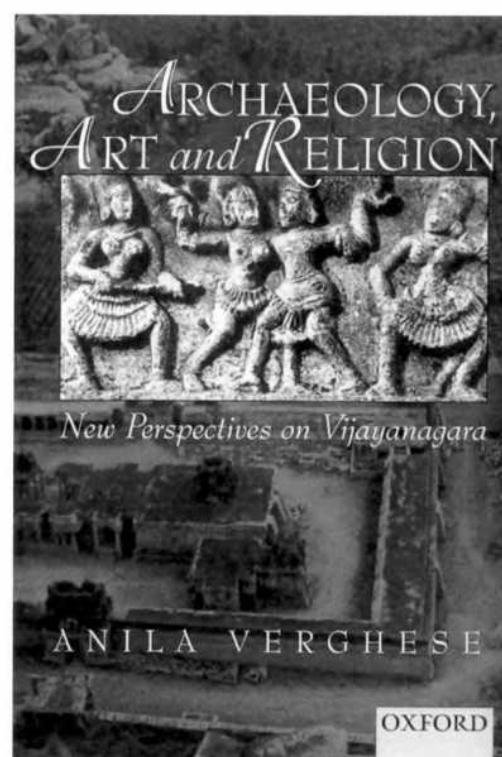
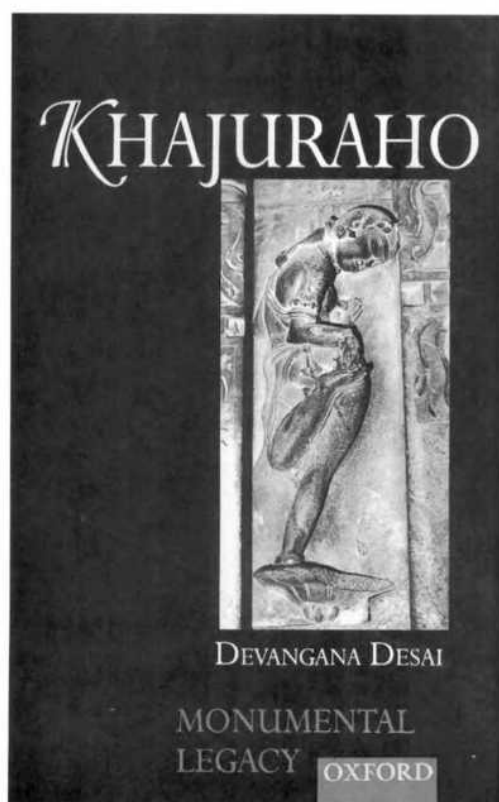
Kavita Singh

***Khajuraho* by Devangana Desai. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2000. xvii + 107 pages, 25 black and white illustrations and 4 colour. Rs 395.**

***Archaeology, Art and Religion: New Perspectives on Vijayanagara* by Anila Verghese. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2000. xvii + 342 pages, 80 black and white illustrations. Rs 695.**

Both books share the same publisher and are archaeological site-specific. Otherwise the two differ considerably. Devangana Desai's slim volume with fewer illustrations but of better quality is a sort of highbrow guidebook on the famous site of Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh. It is the first in a series of such publications about the World Heritage sites in India, aimed at the interested tourist. There are seventeen of them, all of which are archaeological in nature except the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. The title of the series is Monumental Legacy.

Desai is without question the most suitable author to introduce Khajuraho to which she has been singularly devoted and published a scholarly work reviewed here a few years ago (*Marg* 48/4). She is also an authority on the erotic arts of



India, and Khajuraho has a good deal of it. Undoubtedly this is one reason why the site has become an extremely popular tourist attraction with five five-star hotels. Visitors to Khajuraho will do well to read Desai's succinct and lucidly written guidebook to better appreciate the magnificent temples that still stand on the site and are well looked after by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Anila Verghese's book on the no less splendid site of Vijayanagara at Hampi in the south is a more weighty tome and certainly not for the average visitor, though some of the topics she discusses should interest the general reader. She too is familiar with the site as Desai is with Khajuraho, and has authored two previous volumes on the subject. This book is a collection of independently written but unpublished essays that are strung together by their common theme which is Vijayanagara, the capital of a remarkable Hindu kingdom that was founded in the second quarter of the 14th century when the glory of the Chandella dynasty of Khajuraho was already on the wane. Lasting for a little over two centuries, the rulers of Vijayanagara had created a capital no less spectacular than the temple city of Khajuraho. The remnants of that urban splendour, patiently exposed by

decades of archaeological excavations, stand today as mute witnesses to the glory days of a mighty and prosperous empire, as testified by numerous contemporary foreign visitors.

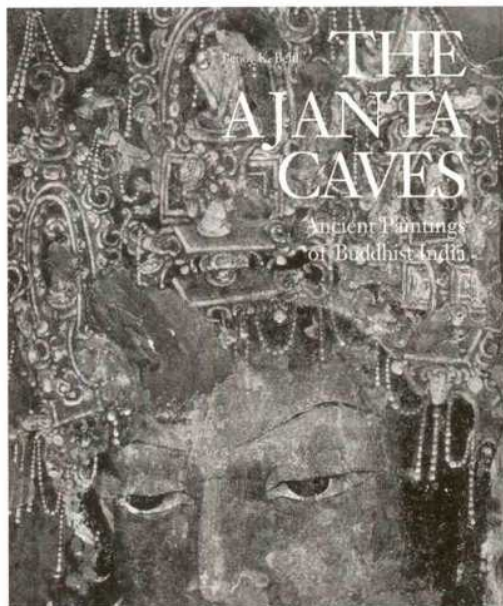
Undoubtedly, the site of Hampi offers the most romantic ruins in the subcontinent today.

The book discusses many interesting topics that one will not encounter in previous publications on Vijayanagara – and there are many – or the general guidebooks of which there are few. Apart from providing a historical background, a well-researched chapter on the history of the archaeological site itself, the author has traced the history of the growth of the ancient city and the development of its temple architecture. However, erudite essays on the practice of Sati, on the prevalence of lesser known religious cults, and the eating habits of the gods and the citizens of Vijayanagara, to mention only a few, should be of particular interest to a wider readership. She has also laudably attempted to use the material remains as the primary evidence, supplementing where necessary with written accounts of foreigners. Complete with an extensive bibliography, glossary, and index, the book's only drawback is the quality of the illustrations, especially when art is supposedly the primary source of information.

Pratapaditya Pal

BOOK NOTICES

***The Ajanta Caves: Ancient Paintings of Buddhist India* by Benoy K. Behl with additional notes on the *Jataka* stories by Sangitika Nigam and a Foreword by Milo Beach. Thames and Hudson, London, 1998. 256 pages, 213 illustrations. US\$ 42.**



Ever since 1819 when a group of British soldiers on a hunting expedition discovered the Ajanta Caves, a number of scholars have written and published on the unique murals. Using long exposures which pick up natural ambient light, Benoy K. Behl captures for the first time some of the finest works of Buddhist murals at Ajanta in all their glory and luminosity.

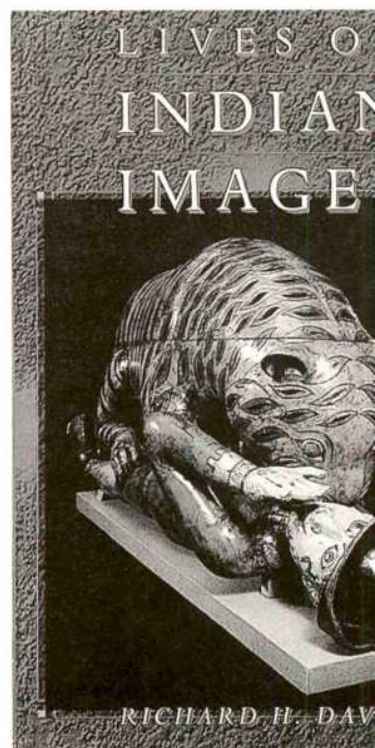
One reason why Benoy Behl's photographs are so successful is that his working method recognizes and respects the visual experience of those artists who originally painted the walls and ceilings. His images are sensitive and their colour, texture, and effect are without precedent. His photographs bring us closer to the direct experience of being at Ajanta than has ever before been possible.

Ajanta provides virtually the only evidence remaining of a painting style that first developed in India, travelled with

the spread of Buddhism into the Himalayan regions, and then via Roads across Central Asia into China from there to Japan and Korea. UNESCO's list of World Heritage Ajanta caves survive as a potent reminder of the great beauty of India's rich past. Sangitika Nigam, Behl's friend and associate, carried out the research fieldwork and has provided notes on the *Jataka* stories. Adequate line drawings, cave plans, a map, some black and white illustrations, and superb colour photographs make this a valuable publication.

Further publications by Behl could bring to the reader paintings from other sites in India using his special technique of photography, would be most welcome.

***Lives of Indian Images* by Richard H. Davis. First Indian edition, paperback, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1999. 331 pages, 50 illustrations. Rs 295.**



Marg

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MARG, meaning a pathway, leads the reader through the cultural heritage of India and its neighbouring countries. Established in 1946, *Marg* is dedicated to revealing lesser known facets of the world of art and is under the general editorship of Dr Pratapaditya Pal. *Marg* is published every quarter in two formats:

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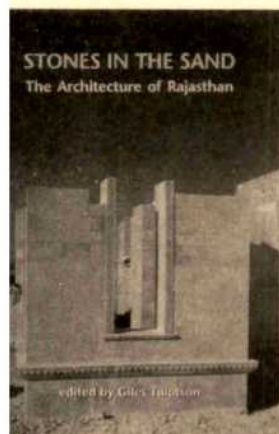
Stones in the Sand: The Architecture of Rajasthan

Edited by Giles Tillotson
pp. 124

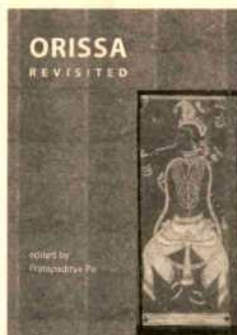
This volume presents the characteristic traditional architecture of Rajasthan: the stone-built forts, palaces and havelis, temples, tanks and kunds, from the 16th century onwards when the region developed its own distinctive style of architecture.

The articles are linked by common themes: Vastu Vidya and architectural texts composed in Rajasthan, the Rajasthani aesthetic, issues of conservation.

Apart from books on forts and palaces and scattered writings on havelis, the architecture of Rajasthan has rarely been studied seriously; this book fills a gap.



RECENT BOOKS



Orissa Revisited

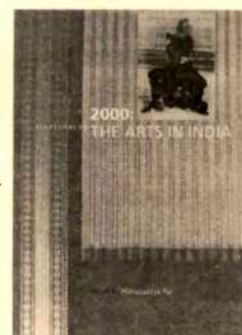
The artistic traditions of Orissa are among the oldest and richest in the subcontinent. This volume provides a wide-ranging view of Orissa's art: its prehistory; the Buddhist heritage; temple architecture, sculpture, and conservation; Odissi dance; traditional and modern painting; and tribal cultural expressions.

Edited by Pratapaditya Pal
pp. 180

2000: Reflections on the Arts in India

Fifteen scholars and practitioners – each an expert in his or her field – assess the current state of art in India. This richly illustrated volume covers archaeology, museums, tribal and folk art, textiles, contemporary art, architecture, urban planning, Hindustani music, dance, theatre, cinema, and television. It also includes a tribute to *Marg*'s founder-editor Mulk Raj Anand, who turned 95 in 2000.

Edited by Pratapaditya Pal
pp. 180



The Arts of Kutch

The former princely state of Kutch in northwestern Gujarat has a long history of art patronage. This volume covers the medieval temple and mosque architecture, the Aina Mahal and Prag Mahal which are museums today, painting, and the rich craft traditions of wood carving, textiles and embroideries, and silver work.

Edited by Christopher W. London
pp. 148

REVISED EDITION, 1997 Bharata Natyam

This book captures the rhythms and beauty of a classical dance-form. With contributions from pioneers, the volume includes essays on Bharata Natyam's history and traditions, dance notation, dance-drama forms, and profiles of exponents – legendary and contemporary. The work has been in constant demand since its first publication in 1979 and has been expanded and updated for this new edition.

Edited by Sunil Kothari, with contributions from Mulk Raj Anand, Rukmini Devi, Padma Subrahmanyam, and P. Sambhamurthy
pp. 236



GANESH the benevolent



REPRINT, 2001 Ganesh the benevolent

A familiar, well-loved figure in the art and religion of Asia, the elephant-headed Ganesh is universally revered as the god of auspicious beginnings.

The present authoritatively researched volume attempts to collate existing reference material on the subject, as also offer valuable original insights into various aspects of Ganesh in Hindu, Tantric, Jain, and Buddhist traditions in India, and Southeast and East Asia.

Edited by Pratapaditya Pal
pp. 168

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This book traces the lives of Indian images as they have been relocated and revalorized over time by various communities of response. It draws upon works composed in a number of Asian languages: Sanskrit, Tamil, Pali, Arabic, Persian, and old Rajasthani. This is an imaginative and innovative exercise that straddles the walls between religious studies, art, history, and cultural criticism. The case studies of images are wide-ranging, from temple thefts, medieval wars, and representations of Muslim iconoclasm, to colonial lootings. Davis takes the reader through great historical periods, pointing out everywhere the meanings of images which are constantly being formulated.

For many centuries, most Hindus have believed that the religious images they place in temples and household shrines for purposes of worship are alive. Hindu priests are able to bring images to life through complex rituals. Priests and devotees awaken their god or goddess in the morning, bathe it, dress it, worship it, feed it, entertain it, praise it, and finally put it to bed at night.

In attempting to reconstruct lives of Indian images and their interactions with human audiences, the author has found it valuable to combine Kopytoff's biographical method with a notion of "interpretative communities", drawn from reader-response literary theory, particularly as formulated by Stanley Fish. This book aims to explore and describe some of the significant ways different communities have seen, interpreted, and constructed Indian religious images as meaningful objects.

The book is organized as a limited series of case studies or biographies. Each chapter focuses on one particular religious object or site and traces it over time.

The first chapter opens with an account of a medieval south Indian bronze image of Shiva that was shown at the National Gallery in Washington, DC, during the 1985 Festival of India. It was originally fabricated for liturgical use and

spent its early life in a temple at Tiruvengadu.

The second chapter investigates the appropriation of select religious images by Indian rulers during the medieval period. The focus is primarily on a Chalukya door-guardian statue, captured by the Chola king Rajadhiraja.

Chapter three deals with medieval Islamic iconoclasm. Here the author focuses not on the events themselves, but rather on the ways in which Muslim and Hindu texts of the period narrated acts of image destruction and reconstruction. He discusses how Mahmud of Ghazni destroyed the Somnath temple in Gujarat in 1026. The subsequent history of the temple and its rebuilding in more recent years is discussed later, in chapter six.

Chapter four looks at the Hindu literature of recovery, especially that centring around the south Indian Vishnu temple at Srirangam. These tales of images destroyed and saved illustrate two very different ways of interpreting and responding to Indian religious icons.

The following chapter looks at a new historical mode of appropriation: the early acquisition of Indian objects by the British during the colonial period. The discussion centres on "Tipu's Tiger", an effigy that British forces took as a wartime trophy after their successful siege of Srirangapattana in 1799, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

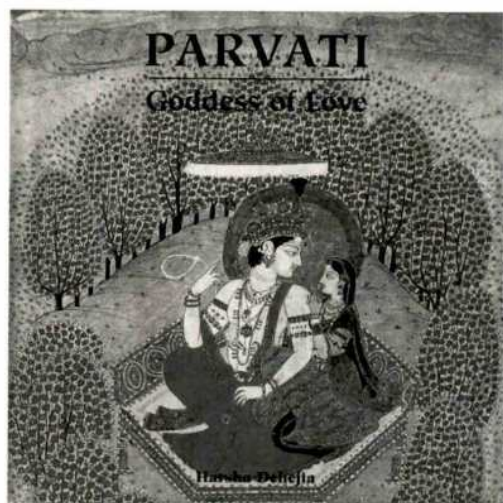
Finally, chapter seven examines the current market in the West for ancient Indian art objects by following a 12th-century bronze image of Shiva Nataraja from Patur temple, as it enters and eventually leaves the art market.

There are many images in India which have long and varied biographies. Davis has chosen a few case studies to illustrate significant historical and interpretative shifts and practices that have affected many objects.

The author provides comprehensive and useful notes and a bibliography, making this the best kind of scholarly book: genuinely informative and highly

erudite. The book was first published in 1997 by Princeton University Press, USA, and this Indian edition is welcome.

Parvati – Goddess of Love by Harsha Dehejia. Mapin Publishing, Ahmedabad, 1999. 120 pages, 45 colour illustrations. Price not mentioned.



Published in association with Grantha Corporation, USA, this book brings to the reader the Goddess Parvati and her manifestations. The book is illustrated with examples of stone sculptures, metal images, ivory carvings, and paintings to illustrate various forms of Parvati, sometimes associated with her consort Lord Shiva. Many of the objects illustrated are from the author's collection.

Dehejia states that this book is an appreciation, not an anthology, a *vandana* not a *shastra*, a portrait of adoration and not an encyclopaedic account of the many manifestations and meanings of Parvati.

The chapters cover the story of Parvati in different traditions, a survey of the literature on Parvati, depictions of Parvati in painting and sculpture, and what Parvati stands for.

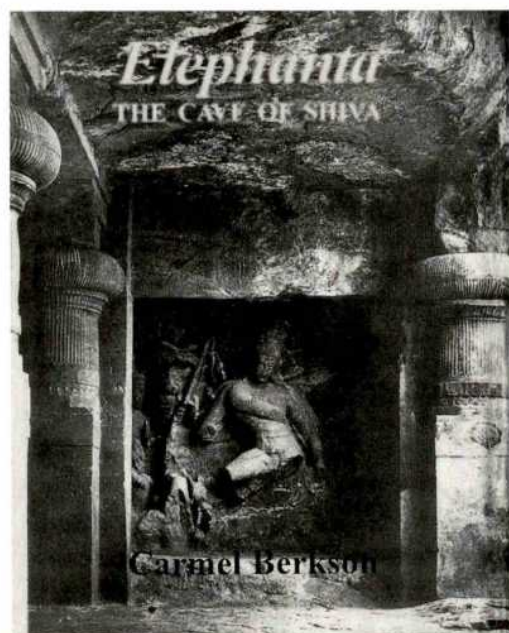
The book ends with a short account of the author's sources and suggestions for further reading, and a glossary.

Dehejia has tried his best to illustrate different aspects of Parvati, and has done

so quite interestingly within the limited space. However, there are some unfortunate discrepancies in this book: On pages 10–11, the object held in Parvati's and Shiva's lower left hands is not a mirror but a *kapala* (a cup or dish). Shankaracharya's period is not the 6th century as given on page 65, but 788–820. The Uma Maheshwara stone sculpture in red sandstone on page 70 is not from Gujarat, but from Madhya Pradesh. The Kailasha temple at Ellora is dated to the 7th–9th century on page 76, but it is more specifically the third quarter of the 8th century.

These blemishes and the misspelt title on the spine of the book aside, the production is of high quality and the good colour illustrations and neat size make the book attractive.

Elephanta: the Cave of Shiva, photographs by Carmel Berkson, essays by Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, George Michell, and Carmel Berkson. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1999. 50 pages, 74 illustrations. Rs 600.



This book was first published in 1983 by Princeton University Press, and dedicated to Alice Boner. This is the first Indian

edition of what is basically a book of photographs, with text and bibliography providing the relevant historical background and context in which the sculptures can be appreciated.

Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty has written the Introduction and a chapter on the myths depicted at Elephanta. She interprets the myths of Shiva and states that Elephanta is the place where the main events in the mythology of Shiva are depicted most powerfully, consistently, and exclusively.

George Michell examines the overall structure of the cave, interpreting it as a mandala-like representation of the heavenly mountain residence of Shiva and even of the structure of the universe itself.

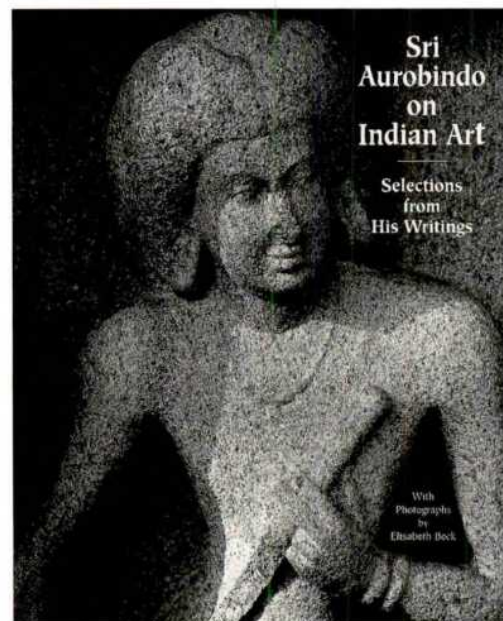
Carmel Berkson's essay supplies historical background and a stylistic analysis of the sculptures. However it is her photographs which capture the imagination. They present the sculptures from different angles, thus preserving with remarkable clarity and beauty the overall composition of the great panelled bas-reliefs. The dramatic alternation of light and shade comes out successfully in the images. They have been documented before in several standard works on Indian art, but never so well.

Berkson's coverage of Elephanta sculptures is quite exhaustive; but I wonder why she has not included images of Ganesh, Karttikeya, and the Matrikas from the east wing shrine.

The bibliography serves as an excellent introduction for the study of Elephanta monographs.

One final point: while the authors uphold Walter Spink's theory that the cave was constructed by the Kalachuri King Krishnaraja in the mid-6th century, this reviewer agrees with Karl Khandalavala and M.A. Dhaky in attributing it to the Konkani Mauryas of the 6th century who were supposedly descendants of a Maurya governor of a district in the Deccan.

Sri Aurobindo on Indian Art: Selections from His Writings, with photographs by Elisabeth Beck. Mapin Publishing, Ahmedabad, and Grantha Corporation, New Jersey, 1999. 228 pages, 151 duo-tone photographs. Price not mentioned.



The three chapters on Indian art selected for this book were originally published by Sri Aurobindo in his monthly review *Arya*, where they appeared in 1920 as part of a series entitled "A Defence of Indian Culture". They were reprinted in the booklet *The Significance of Indian Art*. After Sri Aurobindo's passing, these and some related essays were published under the title *The Foundation of Indian Culture*. In this volume the three essays are followed by stunning photographs with related excerpts from the text alongside. Relevant quotations from other writings of Sri Aurobindo are added in places.

Sri Aurobindo wrote these essays as a spirited reply to the dramatic critic William Archer's book, *India and the Future* published in England in 1917, which reflected colonial prejudices. To quote from the Introduction, "Since then European colonialism and the attitudes that went with it have long faded into the past, but Sri Aurobindo's enlightened interpretation of Indian sculpture and temple architecture has remained as a beacon for all who seek a true

understanding of Indian culture.”

The photographs by Elisabeth Beck and those contributed by Ernst Beck are superb, and excellently reproduced, providing a panorama of India’s architecture and sculpture.

The following errors in the captions should be rectified in any future edition of this book:

Pages 72 and 78: Pattadakal is in Karnataka, not in Andhra Pradesh.

Page 88: Kandariya Mahadeva temple, not Khandarya Mahadeva.

Pages 102–03: The date of the Parashurameshvara temple is 750, not the 7th century.

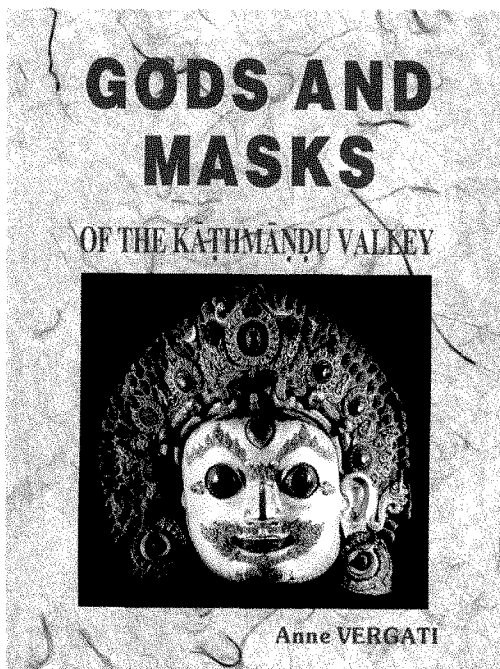
Page 178: Gommata from the cave temple, Badami is of the 6th century, not 8th.

Pages 224–25: Virupaksha temple, Pattadakal is of the 8th century, not 7th.

B.V. Shetti

***Gods and Masks of the Kathmandu Valley* by Anne Vergati. First Indian edition D.K. Printworld, Delhi, 2000. 168 pages. Price not mentioned.**

This book studies the living tradition of masks worn by the Newars of Nepal during festivals and rituals which



transform the identity of the wearer into the god, goddess, or demon represented. These masks are distinct from the ones worn for theatrical performances.

The author focuses on the context in which the masks are worn and the legends which explain the origins of the dances and their ritual significance. Among the Newars, who are primarily Hindu, Buddhism too is still alive and this is reflected in the pantheon of masks drawn from both religions.

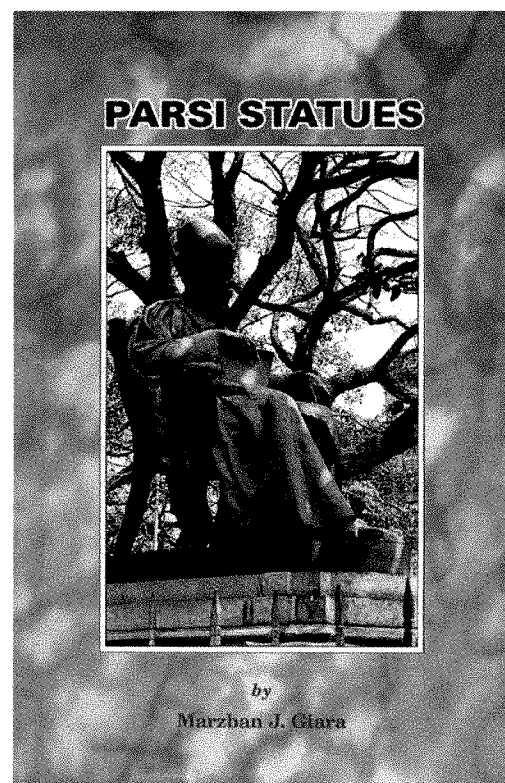
Previously these masks tended to be classified as folk art to distinguish them from classical art. However, according to the author, among Himalayan masks, the Newar masks can be classified as classical, following as they do the norms of traditional iconometry and iconography.

Among the aspects of the subject covered in this book are the rituals involved in the making of the mask, and the concept of transformation of the wearer’s identity.

As Jyotindra Jain, Director of the Crafts Museum, New Delhi, remarks in his Foreword, “This comprehensive monograph...is in many ways, the first of its kind and therefore, will serve as an important reference for years to come.”

***Parsi Statues*, by Marzban J. Giara. Published by the author, Mumbai, 2000. 336 pages, 240 colour photographs. Rs 2000.**

To borrow an apt observation from the late Behram Contractor, premier journalist and chronicler of Bombay: Among the first Parsis most people get acquainted with in Bombay are statues! There are as many as 135 statues of Parsi men and women in Mumbai alone, many of them along the routes which lakhs of commuters take on their way to work. This publication on a never-before-studied subject is a unique pictorial biography. It brings to life the 226 statues of the Parsi community’s many eminent philanthropists and public-



minded citizens, erected in the last 150 years in India, Pakistan, and Iran. The statues are listed in alphabetical order, with their location, medium, date of commemoration, and a biography of the personality/event. The entries begin with the Memorial Column at Sanjan, Gujarat, where the Parsis first landed from Iran. The bibliography lists books and articles on the Parsis, including specific titles on eminent individuals. A valuable appendix has an illustrated list of Parsi-related stamps and First Day Covers.

It took Marzban Giara three years of single-handed research to produce this work. Like his two previous books on Zoroastrianism and Parsi history, this is published and distributed by the author himself (phone: 91-22-4166204).

***Agile Hands and Creative Minds: A Bibliography of Textile Traditions in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka*, by Donald Clay Johnson. Orchid Press, Bangkok, 2000. 278 pages. Price not mentioned.**

This is a book of citations on all aspects of the wondrous hand-crafted textile

traditions of South Asia. The listing begins with reference sources: other textile bibliographies, published glossaries of textile terms, and a volume on textile collections of the world. The next section deals with comprehensive studies and histories of textiles and the trade, region- and periodwise and works on the unique discoveries of early textiles by Sir Aurel Stein and at Fostat. Textile types, techniques, and materials form a substantial section of the book including applique, brocades, dyeing, spinning and weaving, embroideries, felts, lace, quilting, and painted/printed surface decoration. Various types of fibres merit a section of their own. "Special Topics" is a pot-pourri of information encompassing textiles specific to various religions and ethnic groups, individuals who have worked in the field or built collections, and categories of textile workers such as designers, dyers, weavers, nomads, and child labourers, conservation, laws, garment history. The last section deals with special reports — census publications, gazetteers, museum, research institute, and exhibition publications. This work, with an impressive total of 3,539 entries, and subject, author, museum, and geographic indexes shows how well-documented the subject is, and is a very useful database which should indicate areas/gaps for further textile research. Keeping it updated with periodic supplements or new editions in the electronic media will make it more researcher-friendly.

CONTRIBUTORS

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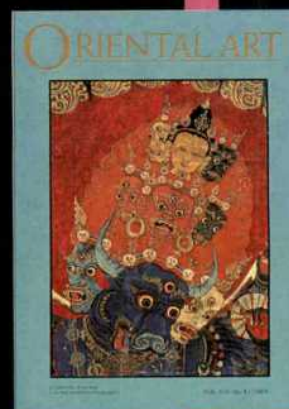
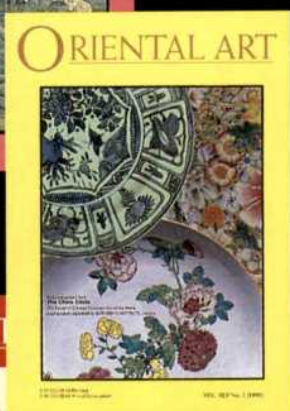
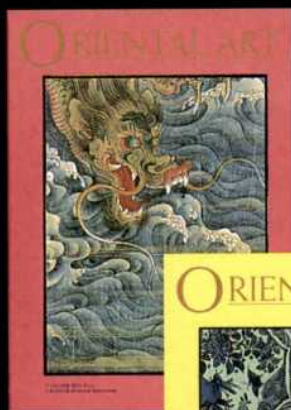
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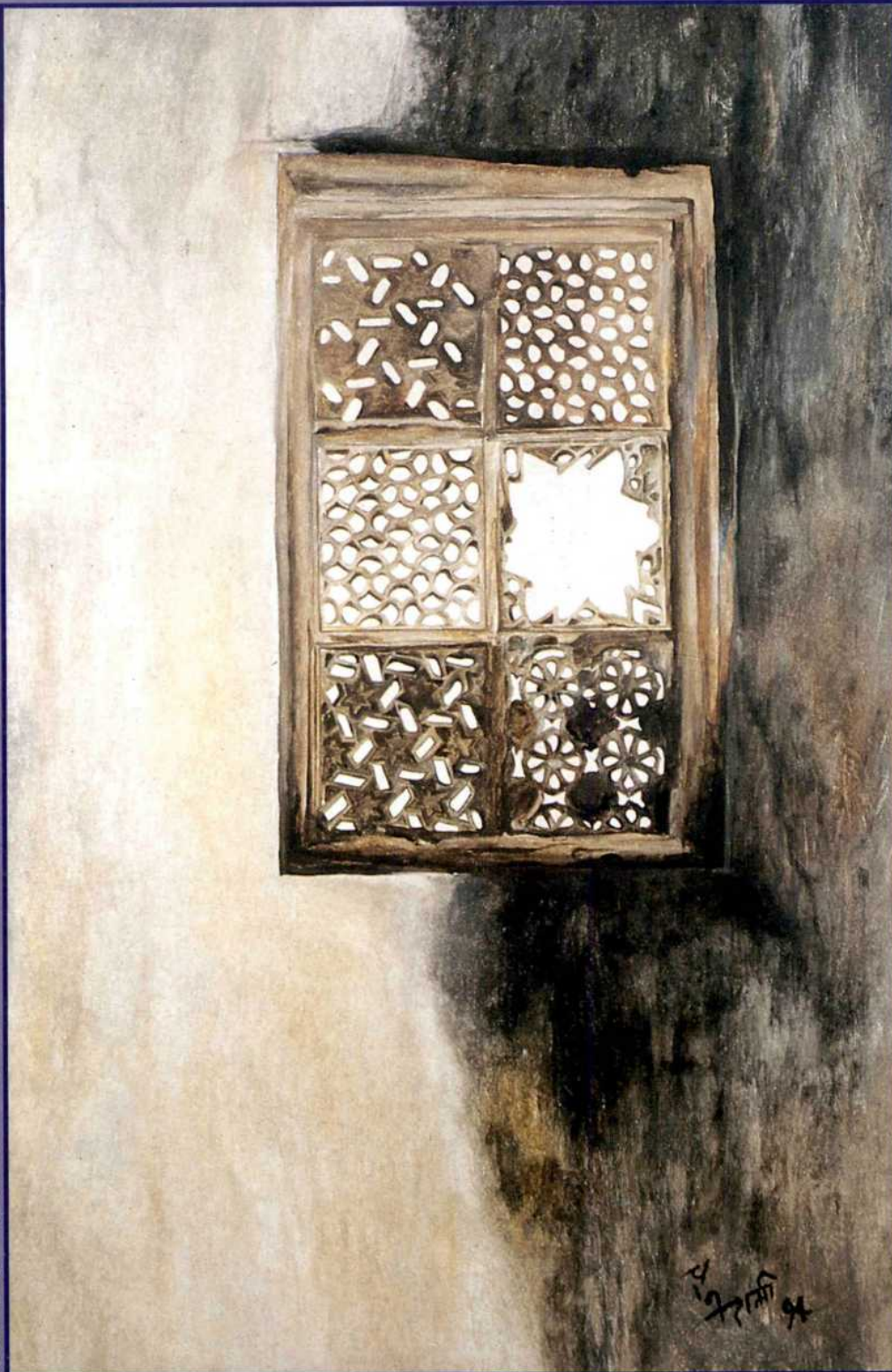
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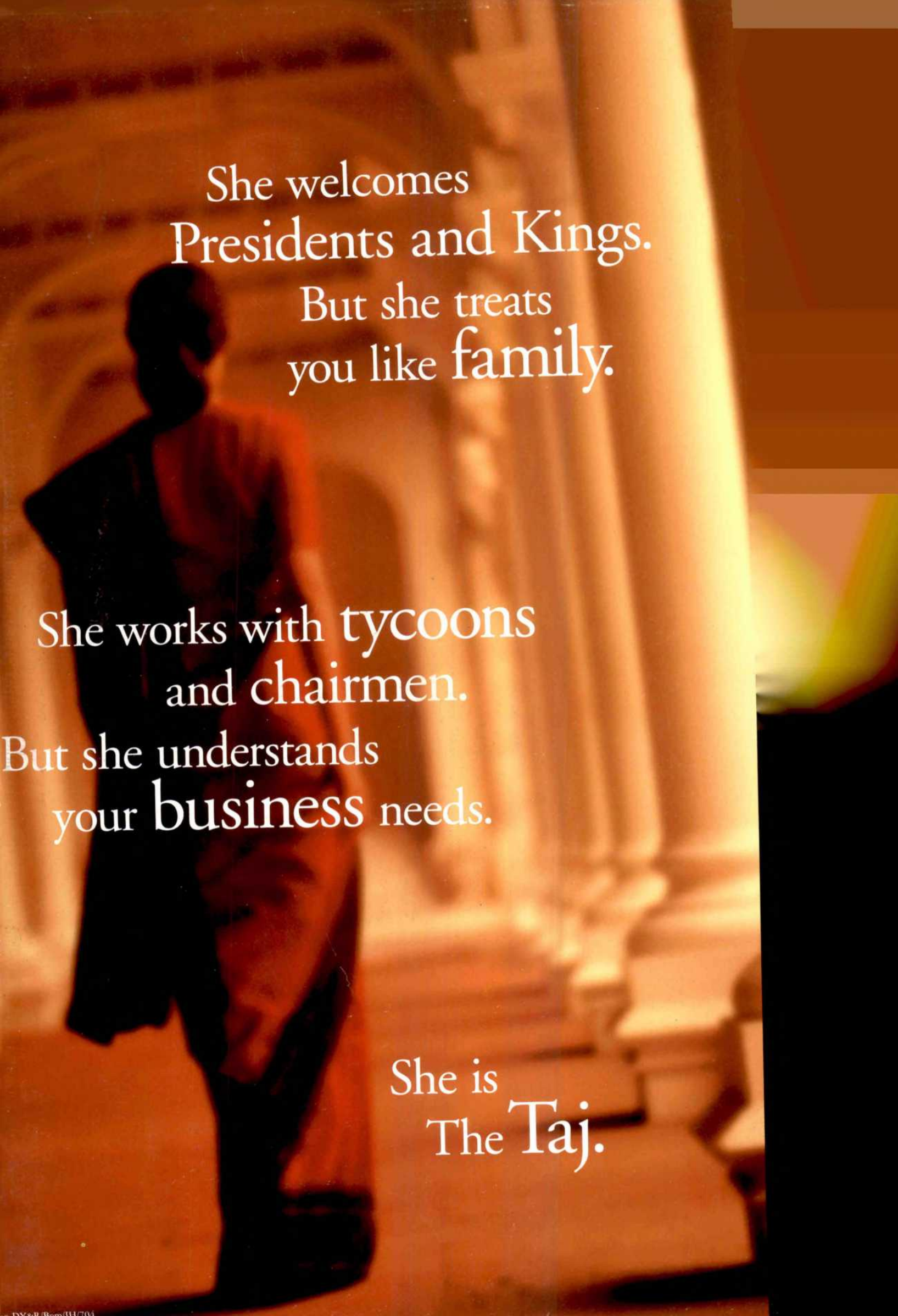
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